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Nick Carter Stories

THE WIND AND THE WIRE
or Nick Carter's Skyline Message

STREET & SMITH • PUBLISHERS • NEW YORK

NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 *Seventh Ave., New York.*
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Single Copies or Back Numbers, 5c. Each.

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No. 39. NEW YORK, June 7, 1913. **Price Five Cents.**

THE WIND AND THE WIRE;

Or, NICK CARTER'S SKY-LINE MESSAGE

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THREATENED WITH DEATH.

Nick Carter examined the package with some misgivings. He was expecting nothing of the kind. He did not receive packages by express so frequently that he accepted this one as a matter of course. The pen-written address, moreover, was suggestive. He tried to recall when and where he had seen the same coarse, angular, almost illegible hand.

"What is it, Nick?" inquired Chick, from the swivel chair at his roll-top desk.

"An express package," Nick replied. "It came this morning."

"Gee! I hope it's not an infernal machine," remarked Patsy Garvan, laughing. "You look as if you suspected something of the kind."

"I was trying to think where I've seen this writing," said Nick, with a glance at his two assistants. "I know I have seen it before—but where?"

"See what's in the parcel," Chick advised. "That may tell the story."

"Probably."

Nick broke the seals and removed the brown-paper wrapper.

A narrow plush box was brought to light, such as might have been made for containing a silver butter knife, or [illegible]e like.

It contained, instead, an empty leather sheath about six inches long. Around it was rolled a piece of ordinary note paper, on which were a few pen-written lines in the same hand as the outer address.

Nick spread the paper and read them:

"MR. NICK CARTER: You have in your possession the handle of a stiletto. I am sending you the sheath that goes with the weapon. You will still need the blade to make it complete. Some day, probably very soon, I will give you the blade—where you will not like it.

"THERESA GARGONI."

Nick Carter's brows knit ominously. He now knew when and where he had seen the writing, and also what the dastardly threat signified.

"You've solved it, I see," said Chick, observing the change of countenance.

Instead of replying, Nick handed him the sheath and the threatening missive, while Patsy Garvan also hastened to inspect them.

"Holy smoke!" he exclaimed. "It's from that she-devil, Theresa Gargoni. She's out after your pelt, chief, as sure as death and taxes."

"Well, I feel equally sure that she'll not get it," Nick dryly answered. "Forewarned is forearmed, you know. Yes, it's from Theresa Gargoni, all right. I now remember her hen-track writing."

"Have you got the stiletto handle she mentions?" Chick asked.

"I think so."

Nick arose and opened one of the glass doors of a large cabinet flanking one of the walls of his business office. It contained a vast collection of articles that had figured as evidence in the innumerable criminal cases which he had successfully investigated. The one he sought was among them—the handle of an Italian stiletto, studded with cheap jewels.

"Yes, here it is," he added, taking it from a shelf. "We found it, you remember, upright on the breast of that lay figure which Theresa Gargoni put in the bedroom of Miss Lena Beverly, a semblance of suicide, with a view to fatally shocking her."

"Yes, yes, I remember."

"We prevented it, however, and afterward arrested the Gargoni gang for abducting the girl at the instigation of her uncle, Caleb Maddock."

"Sure thing," cried Patsy. "The whole gang went up for two years."

"The two years have passed," Nick replied. "Their terms expired nearly four months ago. The rascals are out again."

"And out to get you, Nick, very evidently," said Chick, returning the sheath and scrap of paper.

"Incidentally, no doubt," Nick admitted. "The Gargonis come from a race that neither forgets nor forgives. But they also have something else to get."

"What's that?"

"Their living," said Nick pointedly. "Do not imagine for a moment that Theresa Gargoni, or her father, Tony Gargoni, will devote themselves entirely to wreaking vengeance upon me, even though they do hate me as the devil hates holy water. They must get their living, aside from getting me, and that means more deviltry, more knavish work, for they'll never try to get a living by honest labor."

"Gee! that's too true for a joke, chief," declared Patsy. "They want the coin in some easier way. It's dollars to fried holes that they have a job framed up by this time. Four months is much too long for crooks of their caliber to be idle."

"When were they released, Nick?" Chick inquired.

"Early in March."

"Have you see either of them?"

"No."

"Or know where they are?"

"I do not."

"We might trace them, perhaps, by means of that express package."

"For what?" questioned Nick. "We have nothing on them. They have done time for the crime mentioned. As for that first job, in which they undertook to rob and incriminate Tom Lovell, the Canal Street merchant, they got away with fines which they promptly paid. There is nothing for which we could hold them."

"That's true."

"As for this threat," Nick glanced again at the letter, "you know I always ignore such communications. Hundreds of rascals have threatened me in the same way, but not one of them ever made good. Nor will Theresa Gargoni. I'll take very good care that she gets no opportunity to slip her stiletto through my precious hide. Take my word for that."

"She is exceedingly clever and very daring, nevertheless, and as treacherous a jade as ever stood in leather," Chick said, more gravely. "Don't be too confident, Nick, because of the fact that the threat comes from a woman. It has the virtue of brevity, at least, and is as pointed as a stiletto. She never would have made it, Nick, unless she has something up her sleeve."

"Very true," Nick admitted. "It convinces me of another fact, also."

"Namely?"

"That she is, as Patsy remarked, already at work on a job of some kind. It denotes that she has definite plans, designs which she already is engaged in carrying out, and which she feels sure will prove successful. Otherwise, she would not have threatened me so confidently."

"I see the point," Chick nodded.

"But, as I have said, don't imagine that she is devoting her time and energy to getting me," Nick added. "I am only a side issue, Chick, which she probably fears. This display of animosity and confidence is based upon something else. I'll wager that both she and her big brute of a father, Tony Gargoni, are again engaged in a crime from which they expect to derive a handsome profit."

"Couldn't we head it off, Nick, as we did in the case of Lena Beverly?"

"We have no clew with which to begin operations, as we had in that case."

"That express package——"

"Cuts no ice," Nick quickly interrupted. "It presumably was left at one of the local offices for delivery. Neither Theresa Gargoni, nor Gargoni himself, however, is fool enough to have left any way open by which we might trace them. We can only wait and see what follows. There'll be a sequel to this threatening missive. When it comes—well, we then may contrive to get in our work."

Nick's prediction was verified much sooner than he really expected. It was one morning in June that the threatening letter from Theresa Gargoni was received. Early in the evening of the same day, while Nick was seated at dinner, his manservant, Joseph, appeared at the door and announced:

"You are wanted at the office phone, Mr. Carter."

"By whom, Joseph?"

"Mr. Thomas Lovell, sir, of Fifth Avenue. He says it is very important, sir, and that he must talk with you."

"One of the very men of whom we were speaking this morning," said Nick, glancing at Chick and laying aside his napkin.

"The Canal Street merchant, who was so nearly victimized by Theresa Gargoni," Chick nodded. "This comes close on the heels of her threatening letter. It may be more than a coincidence."

"Possibly," said Nick, rising. "Lovell no longer is in the mercantile business. He sold out his store after marrying wealthy Clara Wainright, and now is doing a brokerage business in the quarters formerly occupied by her father, Prentiss Wainright, who has retired from business. I'll see what Lovell wants."

Half a minute later Nick was in communication with the successful Broad Street broker, who had become a figure in financial circles since marrying the wealthy Fifth Avenue heiress and taking up the business established by his elderly father-in-law. It was one of those lucky chances and changes that come to only a few men.

"Well, Lovell, what's the matter?" Nick at once inquired.

"Is that you, Nick?"

"Yes."

"I am phoning from the Wainright residence," said Lovell. "We are in trouble enough, I fear. Mr. Wainright, my wife's father, is mysteriously missing. There are circumstances in connection with his absence which I prefer not to discuss by telephone. You must come up

here at once. Money is no object, mind you. Will you do so?"

"Yes, of course," Nick replied. "One moment, Tom."

"Well?"

"How long has Mr. Wainright been missing?"

"Since morning. Only a day, I'll admit, but even that is so unusual that we are seriously alarmed. Besides——"

"Well?"

"Some bonds belonging to him are missing from the library safe. I did not discover it until I came home to dinner and learned that he has not been seen since ten o'clock this morning. I then began an investigation."

"What's the value of the bonds?"

"About twenty thousand dollars," said Lovell, in tones manifesting his anxiety and impatience. "But that's not all. There are circumstances indicating——"

"I will judge for myself, Tom," Nick interrupted. "I'll be with you in about twenty minutes."

"Thanks! I'm on nettles till you come."

Nick hung up the telephone receiver, then rang a garage call for his automobile and chauffeur. Returning to the dining room, he informed Chick and Patsy of Lovell's communication and of his own immediate intention.

"Get ready to go with me," he added. "I have rung for Danny and the car."

"Both of us?" questioned Patsy.

"Yes."

"How can we be of any use, Nick, before you have learned the particulars?" Chick inquired, while he arose to comply.

"I'll very soon get the particulars. I don't want you to enter Lovell's residence with me. You may drop me a block south. I'll walk the rest of the way."

"But what are we to do?"

"A little outside work," Nick explained. "If old Mr. Wainright has been duped in some way and robbed of the missing bonds, which I infer he took from the safe for some purpose, it's long odds that his residence will be watched to-night by the crook, or one of the gang of crooks, who have committed the crime. They may try in that way to learn what is being done about it, or who is employed on the case."

"Ah, I see!" Chick exclaimed. "I'll try to discover the rascal, in case you are right."

"Not only discover him, Chick, but also shadow him to cover. We may in that way locate the headquarters of the gang, assuming it to be the work of a gang. I may be able to determine that after learning the particulars."

"But how am I to fit in?" questioned Patsy.

"You may remain with Danny and the car after dropping us," said Nick. "Go to a near telephone pay station, yet one out of view from the Wainright residence. Ring up the house, however, and give me the number of the phone you are using. Then remain there till you hear from me again. I may, after sizing up the case, have some instructions to give you, or some directions to send to Chick, which you may give him unobserved by others."

"Good enough! Leave that to me, chief."

"I am taking these steps at random, of course," Nick added. "There may not have been any robbery, may not be any spy outside of the Wainright dwelling; but in event of the contrary, we shall at least be in a position to accomplish something."

"That's right, too."

"I hear Danny with the car. We'll be off at once."

CHAPTER II.

POINTERS TO CRIME.

It was eight o'clock when Nick Carter approached the Wainright residence. The magnificent stone building occupied a corner opposite Central Park. It had been the palatial home of Mr. Prentiss Wainright for more than twenty years, though for nearly a decade it had been occupied only by himself and an only daughter, with half a dozen faithful old servants. The marriage of Clara Wainright and Tom Lovell, even, two years before, had wrought no radical change in its atmosphere of aristocratic reserve, culture, and quiet magnificence.

Nick was alone, and on foot, and he came from the direction of Madison Avenue. It then was dark, barring a shifty, unsteady glare from the electric lamps, by means of which Nick furtively strove to discover any person whose movements would warrant suspicion. Failing, he turned the Fifth Avenue corner and mounted the broad stone steps.

Chick Carter already had the house and adjoining streets under stealthy espionage.

Patsy Garvan then was on his way to a near telephone pay station.

Nick was admitted by a sedate old butler, who gravely took his coat and hat and then ushered him into a handsomely furnished library, where Lovell and his wife were anxiously awaiting him, the latter a very beautiful, graceful woman still in the twenties.

"I am very glad you could come so quickly to aid us, Mr. Carter," she said earnestly, after an introduction. "We are terribly upset, and hardly know what to do. We need the calm judgment of one of your experience. My father has not remained away for years as he has done to-day. I am sure some ill has befallen him. He is nearly eighty, you know, and—— But my husband will inform you. I am too nervous and agitated."

"I will do all I can for you, Mrs. Lovell," Nick assured her, while he took the chair her husband had placed for him.

"Thank you. I shall feel very grateful for your advice."

"Now, Tom, come straight to the point," said Nick. "What do you really know, or have cause to suspect?"

"What we know, Nick, may be told in a nutshell," Lovell replied, taking a near chair. "Mr. Wainright took breakfast with us as usual this morning. We observed nothing strange in his looks or conduct. I left home for my office at nine o'clock. He went out about ten, without saying where he was going, or when he should return. Since he retired from business two years ago, however, he has invariably been here to lunch and to dine. I returned about five o'clock and found Clara very anxious. I confess that I, too, was mystified and alarmed by Mr. Wainright's absence. Knowing he had bonds and securities of considerable value in the safe, I opened it to see whether any were missing. I found that he had removed a package containing twenty thousand dollars in government bonds, which I know were in the safe last evening. I had occasion to open it just before I retired, and I saw the package when I was locking the safe."

"Are you sure you scattered the combination?"

"Absolutely."

"Who knows the combination?"

"Only Clara, Mr. Wainright, and myself," said Lovell.

"Neither of us have touched the safe to-day, Nick, until I opened it this evening, just before I telephoned to you.

"You found it locked?"

"Yes. We are absolutely sure, of course, that Mr. Wainright opened it and took out the bonds before leaving home this morning."

"Have you any idea why he wanted them?"

"Not the slightest."

"Has he mentioned any contemplated purchase, a deal of any kind, or——"

"Nothing of the kind, Nick. He has had no active interest in business for nearly two years. We are totally in the dark as to why he removed the bonds, where he intended going, or what has become of him."

"Is he in the habit of going out daily?"

"Yes, part of the day; usually an hour or two in the afternoon. But he has invariably returned about five o'clock. His leaving home as early as ten o'clock is almost unprecedented. That, with the fact that he carried a small fortune on his person, compels me to fear foul play."

"I have that in mind, of course," Nick replied. "It does not necessarily follow, however, and we must not jump at that conclusion. Mr. Wainright is nearly eighty, you say?"

"Yes."

"Is he in good health?"

"Fairly good."

"Is he mentally strong, clear-headed, able to take care of himself under ordinary circumstances?"

Lovell hesitated for a moment, then shook his head gravely.

"That is one of the points, Nick, which I did not wish to discuss by telephone," he replied. "As a matter of fact, Mr. Wainright has not been quite himself of late. Do not misunderstand me, however. He is not losing his mind, nor is he in any degree irresponsible. He is mentally clear on all subjects."

"What is the trouble, then?" Nick inquired.

"Well, he is an old man, you know," Lovell proceeded. "He has always been very active in business, with his mind constantly employed. He has had nothing to occupy it, however, since he retired. Such a radical change quite often affects persons of his age. The reaction is very great."

"But in what way is Mr. Wainright affected?"

"Well, he has been fretting for several months, Nick, about his property and his investments," Lovell continued to explain. "Without the slightest occasion, in reality, he has an idea, an hallucination, that some of his stocks and securities are not entirely safe. I have tried in vain to convince him to the contrary. I know all about them, of course, and am in a position to discuss them. He seldom has argued the point with me, however, but has spent hour after hour, day and evening, in his private library adjoining his sleeping room, engaged in computing dividends, interest accounts, the assets and liabilities of various corporations in which he has invested. He has covered reams of paper with figures, for which there really was not the slightest occasion. For Mr. Wainright is worth more than a million, Nick, and his investments are of the gilt-edged kind."

"I understand," Nick nodded. "Elderly persons do, as you say, quite often go wrong in that way. Answer a few questions for me."

"Certainly."

"Has Mr. Wainright disposed of any of his holdings?"

"No, I think not."

"Has he recently spoken of doing so?"

"Yes, at times. I've always been able, however, to dissuade him."

"That may, perhaps, have led him to conceal his intentions," Nick suggested.

"Possibly."

"Has he been inclined to solitude, to avoid company and be alone? I mean, of course, more so than in the past."

"Yes, he has," Lovell readily admitted. "During the past month he has spent most of his time in his library, engaged as I have described."

"Somewhat despondent?"

"Yes, at times."

"His library is on the second floor?"

"Yes."

"Let's go up there," said Nick. "We may find evidence that will shed a ray of light on the mystery."

"Certainly," Lovell assented, rising. "I hardly think so, however, for I have examined all of his——"

The telephone on a stand in one corner rang noisily.

Clara Lovell sprang up, exclaiming:

"Thank Heaven! That may be information concerning him, or——"

"On the contrary," Nick gently interposed, "it is probably a call from one of my assistants."

"One of your assistants?"

"Yes." Nick smiled faintly. "I began work on the case, you see, even before I arrived here. Permit me to answer it."

It proved to be the communication he expected from Patsy Garvan, giving him the number of the phone at which Patsy was stationed. Seeing the disappointment of his observers, when he replaced the telephone on the stand, Nick said encouragingly:

"Don't be too seriously alarmed. The matter may not be as bad as you fear. Only a short time has elapsed since Mr. Wainright left home, you know, and I think we shall discover the truth. I really do not feel that his life is involved."

"I would care nothing about the bonds, Mr. Carter, if he were safely restored to us," said Clara, half sobbing.

"I think we may hope for both," Nick replied. "Now, Tom, we'll go up to his library."

Lovell bowed, and led the way, his wife following.

The private library to which Nick was conducted was a small room adjoining Mr. Wainright's bedroom. It contained an ordinary library table, a cushioned swivel chair, a couch, an easy-chair, and a table near one of the walls.

Nick glanced around after the light was switched on, at the pads and pencils on the desk, at a wastebasket nearly filled with fragments of paper, most of them covered with figures confirming Lovell's statement as to how the missing man had been employed, and at a pile of newspapers on the table.

"Has he recently received much mail?" Nick inquired.

"None," said Lovell. "He has no correspondents."

"He reads the daily papers, I see."

"Yes. We take two, Nick, and he frequently brought in a third."

Nick began to inspect the pile of newspapers, bent upon learning, if possible, in what matters Mr. Wainright was chiefly interested. He had picked up only a few of the papers when he made a discovery—that all of them were turned to an advertisement page.

"H'm, this is quite significant," he said to himself, but without a change of countenance. "He has been seeking something in the advertising columns. Otherwise, all of these papers would not be turned to the same uninteresting page."

"What have you found?" Lovell inquired.

"Nothing," said Nick.

He continued to examine the papers, nevertheless, and presently made another discovery—that each paper was turned to a page containing a column of advertisements of alleged clairvoyants, astrologers, palmists, mystics, trance mediums, and fortune tellers of one kind or another.

"A thread worth following," thought Nick. "This looks very much as if he has been consulting some of these fakers. He may have hoped for encouraging information, or advice in regard to his investments. Naturally, too, if visiting such doubtful characters, he would have concealed the fact."

An open unabridged dictionary on a rack near the desk caught Nick's eye. He turned to examine it. He found it open at the section devoted to the pronunciation of biographical names, and at the pages of those having the initial D.

"Ah, the thread strengthens," Nick soliloquized. "He has recently been looking up the pronounciation of an unfamiliar name. An uncommon one, too, or he might have guessed at it. I may find it in one of these advertisements."

Nick returned to the pile of newspapers.

Lovell and his wife watched him anxiously. Neither spoke.

Presently, after a brief search, Nick found that most of the newspapers, some of them nearly two months old, carried the following advertisement:

"Professor Djal Hakka.—Hindu mystic, psychic, and seer. Direct from Tibet and the Inner Shrines of the secret Brotherhood of the Adepts. Information given on all matters pertaining to one's personal welfare. Your past accurately described, and your future reliably predicted. Advice concerning health, marriage, business ventures, or investments of any kind. The trend of the stock market reliably foretold.

"Professor Hakka has no peer in the realm in which he figures. Hours for consultation, ten to ten."

Nick Carter's brows knit closer while he read this quite audacious advertisement. None knew better than he to what extent the credulous public is imposed upon by such pretenders. That old Mr. Wainright had been consulting this alleged Hindu, moreover, and very probably others of like pretension, he now had not a doubt.

Nick did not tell Lovell of his suspicions, however. He decided to await the result of an immediate investigation, and he returned with the couple to the library.

There he telephoned to Patsy Garvan, appointing a rendezvous a few minutes later, and then he prepared to depart.

"There is nothing you can do about this matter, Lovell, except to leave it to me," he said gravely, when taking his hat. "I shall lose no time in taking steps of some kind, and I hope to report favorably very soon. Are you willing to leave it in that way?"

"More than willing, Nick," Lovell warmly replied. "I know that you will do all that any man can accomplish."

"Very good," said Nick. "I will, in any event, let you hear from me in the morning."

"Do so, Nick, by all means."

Nick again assured him that he would, and then hastened from the house. Ten minutes later he met Patsy Garvan at the appointed rendezvous, where he briefly told him what he had heard and discovered.

"Gee! It looks as if the old man has been bunkoed!" was Patsy's comment.

"That's about the size of it."

"And turned down, perhaps?" added Patsy.

"He is being detained somewhere, at least," said Nick.

"The question is—where, and by whom?"

"Exactly," nodded the detective. "I am going to pay Hakka a visit and see what I make of him."

"To-night?"

"Yes, at once," said Nick. "If I think there is nothing doing, after having interviewed him, I will head for home and lay out our work for to-morrow. In the meantime, however, I want you to visit some of these other fakers."

"Good enough! I'll do it," said Patsy eagerly.

"We have no positive way of knowing whom Wainright has visited. Take the nearer of these parties, therefore, whose addresses you will find in this newspaper, and question them briefly along lines that might cause them to betray themselves. If you find any who does so, remain in the house and have Danny phone to me. I will, in that case, hasten to join you."

"I understand," said Patsy.

"If not, you may report to me at home about midnight."

"All right, chief. Count on me."

"It will not take me long to get the measure of this Hindu," Nick added, a bit grimly. "I'll head for his house at once and will see you later."

J. W. SMITH,
CONFECTIONERY
AND BOOK EXCHANGE,
THE HINDU CHANGE,
336 E. GENESEE ST., BUFFALO, N. Y.

CHAPTER III.

THE HINDU CHANGE.

It was precisely nine o'clock when Nick Carter arrived at the address mentioned in the advertisements of Professor Djal Hakka. It proved to be an attractive brick house in Fifty-third Street, one of a long block, and Nick paused briefly to view it from the opposite curbing.

The only light to be seen was one burning dimly in the vestibule. The lower blinds were closed, and the rooms appeared to be in darkness. In contrast with the brightly lighted dwellings on each side, the house looked ominously grim and gloomy, and it materially increased Nick's unfavorable impressions.

He crossed the street, nevertheless, and mounted the steps. When about to ring the bell, however, he caught sight of a pasteboard card on the inner door of the vestibule. On it was printed the single word:

"Enter."

"Doing business with open doors, eh?" he said to himself. "This don't look as if he stands in fear of anything. I'll have a talk, at least, with this Hindu with wonderful endowments. I'll give him a little rope, to start with, and he may end with hanging himself, saving me the trouble. It's dollars to doughnuts, as Patsy would say, that he will not know me from a side of leather. I'll wager he cannot tell me anything about myself. The boot is likely to be on the other leg."

Nick opened the door and stepped into the dimly lighted

hall, and, as he did so, a bell in one of the adjoining rooms tinkled gently. Half a minute passed, and then a heavy portière masking the doorway of a front room was drawn aside for a moment, and Nick found himself confronted by a man of almost startling aspect.

He was of massive build and as black as the ace of spades. He had crinkly gray hair and a grizzled beard. He appeared to be over sixty years of age, but was without a wrinkle and as straight as an arrow. He wore a loose linen blouse with short sleeves, exposing half of each huge, brawny arm. His trousers were of the same material, large, loose, and baggy, and on his bare feet were a pair of cloth slippers.

Nick gazed at him in amazement for an instant, then inquired a bit shortly:

"Are you Professor Hakka? I wish to see him."

The huge negro smiled faintly, and shook his head, at the same time placing his forefinger on his lips. He then drew aside the curtain and waved Nick into the front room, while with the other hand he locked the street door.

"He doesn't speak English, nor want any intruders while I am here," thought Nick. "It must be that this fellow is only a servant."

The front room, also, was only dimly lighted. What little light there was came through the colored prisms of an antique brass lamp suspended from the ceiling. It shed a faint glow of different colors into the various parts of the room.

The curtains were closely drawn. A thick, double portière hung across a broad doorway leading into a rear parlor. The air was close and stuffy, as if incense of some kind had been recently burned.

The negro entered and immediately took several neatly printed cards from a table, one of which he held for the detective to read, bowing very politely.

Nick read it:

"I do not know English. I am a servant. Do you call to consult Professor Hakka?"

Nick looked at the negro and bowed. Another card was then held for him to read:

"Be seated. I will tell Professor Hakka you are here. He will see you in a few moments."

Nick bowed again, then sat down to wait.

The negro withdrew through the door leading into the hall. He moved with quite majestic dignity, but as noiselessly as a shadow.

Nick glanced at some of the other cards lying on the table. Each was printed to meet an ordinary need:

"Professor Hakka is not at home."

"Professor Hakka is engaged."

"You may call this afternoon, or evening."

Nick read these, and others.

"I wonder how that black Hercules, if he knows no English, determines one from another," he said to himself. "He may have learned them by sight, of course, and knows the significance of each, but how can he tell what question a visitor asks?"

Nick needed none of these conjectures to increase his distrust. The whole business looked to him like charlatanry. He had no belief in supernatural claims, nor in any of the professions of such pretenders.

Five minutes passed.

Not a sound came from the adjoining room.

Suddenly, however, the double portière was parted, and the negro rejoined the detective. He held one of the curtains aside, bowing low, and with a gesture ushered Nick into the rear room.

Nick entered, leaving his hat on the table.

The room was unoccupied. It was disagreeably impressive. Somber draperies entirely covered the four walls. No door, window, mantel, nor anything else was visible, to relieve the funereal suggestiveness of the heavy, deadblack draperies. The ceiling, also, was hidden with festoons of the same dismal hue, in the middle of which glowed a green lens several inches in diameter, from which a weird, uncanny light pervaded the entire room, accentuating its somber impressiveness.

There were only three pieces of furniture in the room. A few feet from the wall, directly opposite the entrance, was a rectangular table, draped nearly to the floor with black velvet.

On the middle of the table stood a crystal sphere about five inches in diameter.

Back of the table was a square seat, having no arms or back. This also was draped with black. In front of the table was another, obviously for the use of any visitor who came to consult the alleged psychic.

Nick's calm, clean-cut face wore a somewhat severe, ominous expression when he beheld the scene. He knew it was designed to impose upon the superstition and awe of more credulous callers. He had no time for a more thorough inspection, for the draperies back of the table were immediately parted and Professor Djal Hakka appeared upon the scene.

He was of medium height and apparently about forty years of age. He was very dark, with the swarthy complexion of an Oriental. His eyes were black and piercing. The ends of his black mustache drooped nearly to his chin, yet it did not conceal his red lips and gleaming, white teeth.

He wore a huge purple turban wound about his head and entirely hiding his hair, while his somewhat fleshy figure was enveloped in a voluminous robe of the same regal hue.

As a matter of fact, however, Professor Hakka was not unattractive in a way, for his features were very regular and his expression one of pleasing gravity.

Nick sized him up from head to foot, noting, also, that he suddenly paused, with countenance quickly changing, as if under some unexpected impression. Nevertheless, he almost immediately waved the detective to a seat at one side of the table, while he deliberately took the other.

"Be seated," said he. "I have kept you waiting."

"Not long," said Nick. "You are Professor Hakka?"

"Yes. But do not tell me who you are, nor for what you have called. I may be able to tell you, if the conditions are favorable."

Nick was rather inclined to doubt it, but he did not then say so.

"Be quiet for a time," added the Hindu.

His voice was noticeably soft and musical. His enunciation of English was almost perfect. He spread his long, shapely hands on the table, then bent forward a little and for several minutes gazed intently at the crystal sphere, as if he expected to see something in its lucid depths.

Nick took no stock in any of it. He obeyed, and remained silent, nevertheless, bent upon learning what the psychic would say to him, and upon allowing him rope enough to hang himself, as he had mentally remarked.

Nick did not believe that any person could by such means, or any mystical gift, tell him anything definite about himself.

Presently Professor Hakka looked up and said:

"You saw me start slightly, no doubt, when I entered and came directly into your atmosphere."

"Yes, I did," Nick admitted, a bit dryly.

"I was unpleasantly affected," said the psychic blandly, yet with some show of perplexity.

"Why so?" Nick questioned.

"I don't often get such an impression."

"What was it like?"

"I felt as if in peril, as if I had entered a danger zone, so to speak."

Nick felt quite sure that he had.

"I understand it now," Professor Hakka added, gazing at him across the table.

"Do you?" Nick inquired.

"Yes."

"What do you make of it?"

"I am always sorry to impart information of a distressing nature, but they who consult me must accept what I receive through the agencies capable of impressing me. I must give you what I get—or nothing."

"Hand it out," said Nick. "No apology is necessary. Nothing you can impart will distress me."

"Nevertheless, you are in danger."

"Am I?"

"Very great danger."

"Of what?"

"Death. A violent death."

"H'm, is that so?" said Nick. "Not a very cheerful outlook, I'll admit. You can tell me, perhaps, in what way, or by what means. Am I to be run over by a freight train, or knocked out by a trolley car, or——"

"Wait!"

Professor Hakka checked him with a gesture.

Nick's suspicions were steadily increasing.

CHAPTER IV.

A BLOW FROM BEHIND.

Professor Hakka again leaned forward and gazed into the crystal sphere as intently as if all his mental energy was concentrated in an effort to discover something more than he already had seen.

"Ah!" he murmured, relaxing for a moment and again gazing at Nick. "Your life has been threatened."

"Is that so?"

"You are menaced by a woman. Not by a woman you have wronged, however, but by one who hates you and vengefully seeks your life."

"Theresa Gargoni," thought Nick, feeling a bit mystified for a moment. "How the devil did he get wise to that?"

"I can describe her, but cannot get her name," Professor Hakka continued. "That lies outside the circle of my endowments."

"Describe her, then," said Nick.

"She is young, dark, and handsome," complied the Hindu. "She has a fiery nature, a vengeful spirit, and a devil dwells in her heart. Beware that devil! He will cause her to strike."

"Not much! I will prevent that, all right," Nick dryly asserted. "I'll get that devil in her by the throat, sooner or later, and yank him out of her. Can you tell me where I can find her, Professor Hakka?"

"No; that is impossible."

"It is unfortunate, also," Nick added. "It might enable me to avert the danger."

"True. But you do not fear danger." Professor Hakka smiled faintly, displaying the edges of his sharp, white teeth.

"That's correct," said Nick. "I don't."

"You are accustomed to danger. I get an impression that you are a hunter, or in some perilous vocation which requires craft, cunning, and great discernment."

"Well, that hits the nail on the head."

"I see you searching, searching, searching, and——"

"Searching is right," Nick again interrupted. "Perfectly right, Professor Hakka."

"My impressions are invariably correct."

"I am a hunter, too."

"I was sure of it."

"But not a hunter of ordinary game," Nick pointedly added. "I am a hunter of men."

"Of men?"

"Yes. Bad men, for the most part. I am a detective."

"Indeed?"

Professor Hakka spoke without a change in his mellow, well-modulated voice. He smiled again. His white teeth gleamed under his black mustache. He stroked the back of one of his hands with his fingers, and appeared to have no serious interest in the detective's announcement of his vocation.

Nick had been watching him very sharply, however, and thought he detected indications that the other was not entirely at ease. He drew a little nearer to the table. His eyes were taking on a somewhat ominous light. Still gazing steadily at the Hindu, he said pointedly:

"You have displayed very extraordinary discernment, Professor Hakka, in stating that a young woman has threatened me with death. It's quite remarkable, moreover, that you should know my vocation is a perilous one, in which you see me searching so constantly. Hasn't it occurred to you, Professor Hakka, that I may have come here in search of something, or somebody?"

"Even so?" said the psychic inquiringly. "What then?"

"I shall insist upon your giving me the information I want," Nick replied. "I care nothing about your impressions concerning me. What I want is information concerning another."

"Another?"

"Precisely. I refer to Mr. Prentiss Wainright, who very recently came here to consult you."

Professor Hakka's brows drooped perceptibly, but he displayed no apprehensions, nor any resentment.

"He came here to consult me?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"Very recently?"

"Yes."

"How recently?"

"To-day," said Nick, bent upon bluffing his hearer into a confession, if possible. "He called on you to-day."

"Several men have consulted me to-day," said Professor Hakka, apparently unmoved. "I know none of them by name. What name did you say?"

"Prentiss Wainright," Nick repeated.

"I never have heard that name. Describe the man."

"He is about eighty years old, with gray hair and——"

"Ah!"

"You know whom I mean?" Nick demanded.

"Yes. He has been here."

"At what hour?"

"About noon."

"What has become of him?"

"I do not know," said Professor Hakka, frowning more darkly. "I am not my brother's keeper. He departed after consulting me. It then was one o'clock."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"No."

"What did he consult you about?"

"Some investments he had in view, also some stocks he thought of selling. I did not advise him, however, for I saw that he was very nervous and mentally unsettled. I never can give reliable advice when consulted by persons in that condition. It acts upon me and affects the forces by which——"

"Stop a moment," Nick interrupted. "I care nothing about your forces, Professor Hakka, nor have I any faith in your alleged mysticism. All this paraphernalia and monkey business cuts no ice with me. I want the truth, pure and simple, and I want it now. What do you know about Mr. Wainright?"

"No more than I have stated."

"You admit that he was here at noon to-day."

"I so have informed you."

"Let me inform you, then, that he is missing, together with twenty thousand dollars in bonds which he had on his person," Nick said sternly.

"What is that to me?"

"Well, it's this much to you," Nick quickly answered: "As you are the last person known to have seen him, I shall, unless you give me additional information, place you under arrest."

Professor Hakka's teeth met with a resentful snap.

"For what?" he demanded. "Because a missing man called here and departed?"

"Not for that alone," Nick sharply retorted. "But chiefly because I take no stock in this business of yours. You cannot gull me into believing you get any information from this glass globe, nor from any other supernatural agency. You have told me, nevertheless, some very pertinent facts. It has become a serious question in my mind how you got hold of them. You must have learned them from some source. You cannot have discovered them since I entered. Tell me at once, Professor Hakka—how did you know my life has been threatened by a woman?"

"I got it through powers which——"

"Powers be hanged!" Nick again interrupted, more sternly. "You have no supernatural powers. You are playing a game here, the game of a charlatan and rogue."

Hakka's piercing black eyes were glowing like balls of fire.

"Do you dare——" he began.

"Oh, I dare anything that comes in line with my duty, or when up against fellows of your stamp," Nick cut in harshly. "You cannot blind me with your pretensions. You knew me the moment you entered this room, and you knew for what I came here. Tell me at once—how did you know it? Who gave you the information? Are you posing in a fictitious character? Tell me at once, or—stop! You're not going!"

Professor Hakka, shrinking apprehensively, started to rise.

Nick's right hand whipped out a pair of handcuffs. His left arm shot across the table, his hand closing with vise-like grip around his hearer's wrist. He jerked the Hindu toward him, half across the table, dislodging his purple turban and parting his loose, voluminous robe.

Then a single, piercing cry, a shriek imbued with wild and vengeful fury, rang through the room.

From under the tumbling turban rolled great waves of raven-black hair. An arm swept upward, and a knife blade flashed in the greenish light.

Nick sprang aside to avoid the murderous stroke, shouting sternly:

"Oh, ho! That's your game, is it? We'll see——"

What more he would have said died in his throat.

The curtains behind him had parted. The huge negro bounded between them. A weapon fell, as swift as a lightning stroke.

It fell squarely on the detective's head, and Nick's knees buckled under him like hinges. He sank in a crimped, senseless heap at the feet of his brutal assailant.

CHAPTER V.

PATSY HAS A HUNCH.

It was nearly twelve o'clock when Chick Carter and Patsy Garvan arrived home that evening, after having followed the instructions Nick had given them.

Chick was the first to arrive. Ten minutes later he heard the automobile stop outside, and Patsy hurried into the study, where the former then was seated.

"Hasn't the chief showed up?" he abruptly questioned.

"Not yet," said Chick.

"What have you accomplished?"

"Nothing."

"No spy, then, was watching the Wainright residence?"

"None that I could discover," said Chick. "I'd have sighted him, all right, if there had been one. I saw Nick leave the house about half past eight, but he had cautioned me not to approach him. I merely made sure he was not shadowed. There was nothing doing along that line, Patsy, nor any sign of a spy in that locality."

"And that was nearly four hours ago."

"Certainly. But what of that? Why are you so stirred up?"

"Gee! I dunno," declared Patsy, who had been walking to and fro quite excitedly. "But, somehow, Chick, this don't look good to me."

"What doesn't?"

"The whole business." Patsy stopped short and spread both hands on the study table. "First, that threatening letter from Theresa Gargoni. Second, the disappearance of old Wainright and a lot of bonds, followed by the appeal of Tom Lovell, who was robbed and jobbed by this same Gargoni girl two years ago. She swore, when we queered her game, she'd get even with him and us sooner or later. I begin to think she's done it."

"Why so?"

"Because the two incidents of to-day come so close together," Patsy forcibly argued. "It's more than a coincidence, Chick, in view of the fact that the same parties are involved."

"There is something in that," Chick admitted.

"Besides, I saw the chief after he left the Wainright residence. He had picked up a clew. He thinks Wainright has gone a bit dippy over money matters, and that he's been consulting clairvoyants and other fortune-telling fakers."

"Nick told you that?" questioned Chick, with increasing interest.

"Sure thing!" cried Patsy, producing the newspaper Nick had given him. "Here's a bunch of their ads. He directed me to call on several of them and make a few inquiries."

"Have you done so?"

"Yes, but there's nothing doing. None of them appeared to warrant suspicion. Here's the ad of the one Nick chiefly suspected."

"Professor Djal Hakka?"

"Yes. He went to question him while I tackled the others. He said he'd show up here about ten o'clock," Patsy earnestly continued. "It wouldn't have taken him three hours to question a heathen Hindu. He'd have finished him up brown in twenty minutes, unless handed something he wasn't looking for. Hang it, Chick, I've got it on me good and strong. There's something wrong, or the chief would have been here long ago."

Chick's face had become more grave while listening, and at the same time reading Hakka's advertisement. He realized all of the possibilities Patsy's forcible remarks suggested. He looked up abruptly and asked:

"Did Nick tell you he should head for home immediately after seeing this fellow?"

"Yes, sure," Patsy repeated. "He left the others to me. I was with Danny, you see, and we had the car. We could cover the ground very quickly."

"Is the car outside?"

"Yes. I told Danny to wait."

"We'll run up there, then, and see what's doing," Chick declared, rising abruptly. "We can find out, at least, whether Nick has been there, and when he left."

"Gee! I know he's been there," Patsy insisted, while they hurried from the house. "If the Hindu denies it, you can bet your bottom dollar there's something wrong. That would make a cinch of it, for the chief wouldn't have given me a wrong tip."

"That's true," Chick admitted. "We'll very soon find out."

It was precisely midnight when the car came to a stop a few doors from the house occupied by Professor Hakka. Chick approached the dwelling alone, leaving Danny in the car, while Patsy stole across the street to watch the house from an opposite doorway.

The light still was burning in the vestibule, but the card inviting visitors to enter had been taken from the door. Chick rang the bell, and waited about five minutes, when the summons was answered.

The huge negro appeared at the door. He had in his hand several of the printed cards already described.

"Excuse me for calling so late," said Chick. "Are you Professor Hakka?"

The negro shook his head and touched his lips, then held a card for Chick to read:

"I do not know English. I am a servant. Do you call to consult Professor Hakka?"

Chick nodded, sharply eying the man.

The negro shook his head again, then closed his eyes for a moment, pointing to them and then up the near stairs, obviously meaning that his master was abed and asleep.

Chick was somewhat puzzled. He could not see any way of getting information from the negro, nor just how to make him understand that he must arouse his master and bring him down.

Chick's quandary was quickly ended, however, by the unexpected appearance of Professor Hakka himself at the head of the stairs. He at once came down, wearing a voluminous woolen bathrobe, with a huge linen turban wound around his head. The negro heard him, and stepped back into the hall.

"I heard the bell," said Hakka, addressing Chick. "My man does not know English. I was in bed, but arose to see who had rung. I heard you ask for me. It is too late. You may call to-morrow. I never give consultations after ten o'clock."

Chick eyed him narrowly, noting his suavity, his politeness, and he could detect no sign of apprehension or distrust.

"I don't wish to consult you," he replied. "I want to find out who has done so this evening."

"No one," said Hakka, without a change of countenance. "I have had only one visitor this evening. He came on other business."

"What business?"

"He was seeking a man who consulted me this morning."

"Have you his card?"

"He gave me no card. He merely said his name was Carter."

"That's the man I'm looking for," said Chick. "What time was he here, and how long did he remain?"

"He came at nine o'clock and remained about ten minutes," Hakka blandly asserted. "I could not give him the information he wanted. The man about whom he inquired came to me for advice about some investments. I could not advise him. He then said he would consult a clairvoyant who has rooms on Twenty-third Street. I don't know whether he did so or not, but I so informed Mr. Carter, who then said he would hasten to see the clairvoyant."

"Do you know the clairvoyant's name?"

"Madame Loretta. Her card is in the newspapers."

"Did Mr. Carter say anything more to you?"

"I recall nothing more."

"Did he mention the name of the missing man?"

"He did. I think it was Wheelwright, or Wainright. The man was a stranger to me. That is all I can tell you."

Chick then did not doubt it. The story was plausible. It was readily told, with apparent frankness and the air of one willing to aid him. It corroborated all that Nick had said to Patsy, and it seemed to explain his delay in arriving home. Chick accepted the story at face value.

"All right, Professor Hakka," he replied. "I am much obliged, and sorry to have troubled you at this hour. But the circumstances——"

"I understand." Professor Hakka bowed and waved his hand indifferently. "You have made me no trouble. I wish I could do more for you."

"Thank you," said Chick, turning down the steps. "Good night!"

Hakka bowed again, then closed the door and extin-

guished the vestibule light. He paused briefly in the darkness of the hall, listening intently, and heard the receding steps of the detective.

Then, with a muttered oath, with the snarl of an angry cat, and steps as swift and noiseless, he darted into the front room and peered with gleaming eyes through the closed blinds.

Chick returned to the waiting car, where Patsy quickly rejoined him.

"Anything doing?" he asked eagerly.

"No, not here," said Chick, and he then told what he had learned. "We'll look farther. Let's see that newspaper."

They examined it in the glare of one of the headlights. They found Madame Loretta's card in the column devoted to such advertisements, and obtained her address.

"We'll hike home and see whether Nick has returned during our absence," said Chick. "If not, we'll give the clairvoyant a call. I'm going to the bottom of this business, now that we've started in."

"That's the stuff!" declared Patsy.

"Let her go lively, Danny."

Ten minutes took them home, and their quest proved vain. Nick had not returned.

One o'clock found them at the door of Madame Loretta's residence. The insistent ringing of the bell aroused her, and a white face in a halo of tumbled yellow hair was thrust from a second-floor window.

Chick gazed up and questioned her—again in vain.

Madame Loretta informed him, with convincing earnestness, that she knew nothing about Mr. Wainright, that she had never seen nor heard of him, and that Nick Carter could not have called on her that evening, she having spent it at a theater. In confirmation of the last, she threw down a program which she had brought home, and then she called a lodger from the next floor to corroborate her.

Chick happened to be acquainted with the lodger, and that settled it.

Not that alone, however, for he was thinking deeply, and his face wore a more threatening frown when he arrived home again and dismissed Danny with the car.

"Well, what next?" Patsy grimly questioned, after they had entered. "Are we to quit here and call it off?"

"Not by a long chalk!" said Chick decidedly. "I've got a hunch."

"What's that?"

"I've been sizing up the story that Hindu told me. It sticks in my throat. He was too ready with it. I ought to have thought of that. I now suspect it was cut and dried, in case any one called to question him. He was oily, too, and as smooth as a smelt, while telling it. Why wasn't that big negro abed, moreover, if his master quits business at ten o'clock? I've got a hunch, Patsy, that something was put over on us."

"Gee! you may be right," Patsy exclaimed hopefully. "But there's nothing in arousing them again. We have no search warrant. What's to be done?"

"Just one thing, Patsy, under the circumstances," Chick promptly declared. "No more time shall be wasted. If our suspicions are correct, every minute counts for something. I'm going to find out. I want a look inside of that house. Put on a woolen cap and slip an extra gun into your pocket. We'll go into that house, crooklike, Patsy, through a back door or window."

CHAPTER VI.

STIRRING MOMENTS.

Patsy Garvan needed only the hint Chick had given him. It was no new move for them to make, this taking a long chance to immediately secure evidence in confirmation of their suspicions, evidence which, if they were right, might be forever destroyed before daybreak.

It was two o'clock when they again arrived in Fifty-third Street, then proceeding like thieves in the night.

Hakka's house, as well as the adjoining dwellings, were shrouded in darkness. The street, or that part of it, was silent and deserted. The clouded sky, with not a star to relieve the gloom of back yards and alleys, favored the hazardous venture.

"We'll tackle the back of the house," Chick said quietly, after they had sized up the conditions and surroundings. "The kitchen and dining room evidently are in the basement, also a hall that runs straight through the house, from that door under the front steps to one in the rear."

"The back door for us, then," muttered Patsy.

"Come on."

They made their way with considerable difficulty to the rear of the block, and easily determined which house the Hindu occupied. All of them were in darkness. The gloom in an alley and a double row of back yards was sufficient to hide the stealthily moving figures from chance observation.

Five minutes brought them to a back door, near which were two uncurtained windows. Chick shot the beam of his electric flash light through one of them and peered into the room. The shifty light leaped from a sink to a stove, and from the stove to a bare table and two cheap wooden chairs.

"It's the kitchen," Chick whispered. "Both windows are locked. We'll try the door."

Chick found the door locked, also, with the key inside. He thrust under the door a piece of fine wire brought for the purpose. It met with an obstruction.

"There's a thick mat on the entry floor," he murmured to Patsy, at his elbow. "The fall of the key will not be heard. With that out of the lock, and no bolts inside, we can get in easily."

"Like breaking sticks," Patsy muttered.

With a pair of fine pincers Chick turned the key until he could push it from the lock. It dropped noiselessly on the mat. With a picklock, manipulated without a sound, he unlocked the door and found that he could open it.

"Ready?" he tersely questioned, glancing at Patsy.

Patsy replied with a nod, fishing out his own flash light, and slipping a revolver into his side pocket.

"Don't use the gun except for a holdup," Chick directed, observing him. "We are not working within the law."

"No need to tell me that," said Patsy. "Get a move on. I'll follow."

Chick stepped into the entry, and Patsy followed, quietly closing the door. Then both paused to listen. Not a sound from above, nor from any direction, broke the tomblike silence.

Chick shot a ray of light through the surrounding gloom. It revealed the entire length of the narrow entry, the door under the front steps, that of the kitchen, of a room beyond, and the bare stairs leading to the floor above.

Chick touched Patsy's arm significantly, then stole away.

He looked into the kitchen, the adjoining laundry, then down a flight of stairs leading into a cellar, and then he brought up at the front door, which was both locked and bolted. He crept back and rejoined Patsy.

"Nothing doing," he murmured. "There's no one down here. We'll go up a floor."

They crept up the stairs, Chick leading. When near the top, Chick shot a ray of light into the main hall. He saw only the papered wall, an open doorway, the folds of a black curtain, hardly distinguishable from the prevailing darkness. He crept up to the top stair.

It creaked noisily under his feet, and the sound seemed to be echoed by another several yards away.

Chick held his breath, with one hand checking Patsy. Both listened. Silence reigned.

Chick moved again and crouched on the hall floor. Then out of the gloom came a spit of fire, a single spiteful flash. The crack of a revolver rang through the house. A bullet whizzed by Chick's ear and tore a hole in the wall, spraying him with plaster.

Chick saw the flash and was up in an instant. One bound took him to the open doorway, through which he plunged. He found himself in the folds of a heavy curtain.

He heard other steps, then, and a half-smothered gasp. He reached out fiercely in the direction of the sound, and through the swaying curtain he touched—a moving figure.

He was able to grasp it for a moment, a struggling, writhing, wriggling form, and a thrill ran through him.

The figure was that of—a woman.

Then came a second shot. A bullet cut through the curtain and through Chick's sleeve, grazing his elbow. It numbed his arm, and the muscles went lax.

The woman vented a snarl, and tore herself from his grasp.

Chick reached again, groping blindly against the confusing curtain, but she had slipped out of reach and was gone.

Such episodes transpire in the wink of an eye. Scare three seconds had passed since the first shot was fired.

"Watch out, Patsy," Chick roared, casting stealth to the winds. "There's a woman here. Throw a light through the hall. Watch in both directions and don't let her escape. Leave the rooms to me. I'll get her."

Patsy answered with a shout, quickly lighting the hall, and bounded to a point enabling him to view every part of it.

Chick had cleared himself from the curtain and again was using his searchlight. He had entered Hakka's consultation room, in which Nick Carter had been floored by the negro several hours before.

Something on the floor caught Chick's eye. At first sight he thought it a human head, but upon closer examination it proved to be Hakka's crystal sphere, it having rolled from the table during the fray with the detective.

Chick darted into the front room in search of the woman. The room was deserted. The windows were closed and locked. He crossed the consultation room again, parted the curtains back of the table, and then discovered the open door of a dining room directly over the kitchen. His searchlight revealed a switch key on the wall near the door.

Not eager to risk a third shot from an unseen foe, Chick reached around the door casing in the darkness and quickly turned the key. In an instant a blaze of electric light filled the three rooms and the adjoining hall.

Chick glanced sharply around. The dining room also was deserted. Both windows were closed and locked. The closet was unoccupied. A dumb-waiter well in one of the walls was empty, the lift down, the rope broken. Obviously, escape in that direction was impossible.

Chick darted again from one room to another. They were the only three rooms on that floor. He searched back of the draperies, under the table and chairs, into every nook and corner—but he searched in vain. The woman had disappeared.

Chick stepped into the hall. Patsy stood waiting and watching near the basement stairs.

"Haven't you seen her?" Chick demanded.

"Seen nothing," said Patsy. "She hasn't come this way, nor any one else. She's in one of those rooms."

"Impossible. I've searched them thoroughly."

"Then she went through the window."

"Equally impossible. They're closed and locked."

"Down another stairway, then."

"There is none."

"Through some other door, then, or——"

"There are no doors except these leading into the hall."

"But, hang it!" cried Patsy. "I'll swear she didn't come this way. No one has showed up in the hall. That's equally strange, too. Where's the Hindu and that big, grizzly-headed negro? Why don't they come down? They've had time enough since those two shots were fired. Have they bolted?"

Chick's face wore a look of desperate determination.

"Wait here," he cried. "I'll find out why they haven't come down. Hold up any one you see."

"You bet!"

Chick ran through the hall and hastened up the stairs, revolver in one hand and searchlight in the other. He soon found, however, that he did not need the weapon, for every chamber in the house was deserted. Most of them were unfurnished, as bare as when the house was turned over by its builders.

In only two bedrooms, both on the second floor, was there any evidence of recent occupants—two disordered beds, a few soiled towels, some burned matches here and there, and a few newspapers cast carelessly on the floor.

There was no sign of the Hindu and his negro servant, nor of anything belonging to them.

"By Jove, bolted is right," thought Chick, after a hasty, but thorough, search. "They have cleaned up completely and made a quick get-away. My first visit and the questions I asked must have alarmed that swarthy rascal. He evidently supposed that no one knew of Nick's visit. They have done him in some way, surely, and I must look farther."

Chick ran down and rejoined Patsy, hurriedly telling him what he had discovered. Both then began a more careful search in the three adjoining rooms, speedily finding evidence that had escaped Chick's notice during his hurried hunt for the unknown, desperate woman who had vanished so mysteriously.

On the floor in Hakka's consultation room were several small pools of blood, congealed and nearly dry, also splashes here and there on the table cover and draperies. One of the seats was overturned, as if kicked over during a struggle. The table cover was awry and wrinkled, as if grasped by a powerful hand in the heat of passion, and one of the wall draperies was partly torn from its fastening and hung zigzag from the supporting rod.

Something protruding from under one of its folds gleamed in the greenish light from the overhead lens, and Chick hastened to pick it up, then uttered a cry.

"Great guns! what are we up against? Has that she-devil made good?"

"What's that?" cried Patsy.

Chick turned and displayed it.

It was the naked blade of a broken stiletto. The handle was missing—the same handle then in the cabinet in Nick Carter's study.

Around the end from which the handle had been broken, enabling one to safely grasp and use the deadly blade, a linen handkerchief was tightly twisted and tied. Both the blade and the handkerchief were covered with blood.

CHAPTER VII.

A BAFFLING MYSTERY.

The green lens in the festooned ceiling glowed like a monstrous, malevolent eye gazing down at the grave, white faces of the two detectives. For several moments neither of them spoke. They stood looking with dismay at the broken stiletto Chick was displaying.

"Thunderation!" Patsy exclaimed, at length. "It's the blade of a stiletto—Theresa Gargoni's stiletto!"

"Surely!" Chick admitted.

"Has she made good? Has she done what she threatened?"

"It looks so." Chick gazed around the room. "There has been a fight here. Here's blood on the floor and draperies. Nick evidently discovered something and attempted to make an arrest. He must have been assaulted and stabbed."

"Killed, perhaps."

"Possibly."

"But the woman—what has become of her? Was she Theresa Gargoni? What was she doing here? Were the Hindu and negro in league with her?"

"Something of the kind," said Chick, striving to size up the circumstances. "She may have hired them to help her do the job. Some woman certainly was here, and this weapon points to Theresa Gargoni."

"The two men have bolted," said Patsy. "That's a cinch, Chick. Why, then, did the woman remain? What was she doing here?"

"She must have been just ready to leave when we arrived," Chick reasoned. "She probably heard us in the basement and suspected our identity. Theresa Gargoni hates me as heartily as she hates Nick. She would have taken any long chance to get a crack at me in the darkness. She has not forgotten how I fooled her in that house in Bayard Street."

"It's dollars to doughnuts that she was the woman."

"I think so. I could have held her, if I hadn't been entangled in these infernal draperies."

Patsy gazed at the somber curtains covering the walls, then at the glowing lens, and draped table, and the crystal sphere lying on the floor.

"What kind of a joint is it, anyway?" he demanded. "Why is it fixed up in this fashion?"

"That's plain enough," Chick replied, laying the broken stiletto on the table. "It was designed to impress the credulous fools who came here to consult the Hindu. It's odds that Wainright was one of them, and that he has been bunkoed and robbed of his bonds. The rascals have killed him, perhaps, and got rid of his body. Nick got wise to something, undertook to arrest the gang, and he may have met with the same fate. That's what I make of it."

"But what has become of the woman?" Patsy repeated. "How did she give us the slip? She cannot have gone through the floor, or the walls, and I'll swear she didn't go through the hall."

"We'll make another search."

"Besides, if Nick has been turned down, what has become of his body?" added Patsy. "It ought to be here. Can the rascals have taken it from the house? Can they have cleaned up completely and got away with all of their belongings in three or four hours?"

"A good deal may be done in that time," Chick replied. "We'll search the entire house."

They then proceeded to do so, beginning with another inspection of the three rooms. They found it utterly impossible for an escape to have been made from the two front ones, and that left only the dining room, which was in the rear and directly over the kitchen.

"She fled in this direction, I think, but there seems to be no way for her to have escaped," said Chick, when they entered the room, then brightly lighted.

Patsy glanced at the closed door leading into the hall, then at the locked windows and into a large china closet.

"No way is right, Chick, unless she went down in this dumb-waiter," said he, turning to inspect it.

"Impossible."

"It's large enough to have held her."

"That's true," Chick admitted. "But the lift is down, closing the opening into the kitchen. She could not have gone down in the lift, or we should have heard her. The rope is broken, moreover, and the lift must have been down when she came this way."

"She may have been going down in it when the rope broke."

"Nonsense! It would have fallen with a crash. We should certainly have heard it."

"Gee! it beats me, then," said Patsy. "She must have evaporated."

They sounded the floor and walls, but could find no secret exit, and Chick then led the way to the kitchen. Their search proved entirely vain, however, in so far as the vanished woman was concerned.

A visit to the cellar, nevertheless, brought to light a hat stuffed into a refuse barrel. The sweatband was punched with Nick's initials, and both recognized it as the hat worn by the detective. Nothing else could be found, however, belonging either to Nick or to Wainright, and a search through the upper part of the house left the mystery equally dark.

Day was breaking when these investigations were completed, and a search was then made in the rear yard and alley. In the ground of both were numerous footprints, some of them obviously those of the huge negro, and many of them so deep and intermingled that Chick could come to only one conclusion.

"The rascals went this way and carried out a heavy burden, probably several of them," said he, while they studied the footprints. "They have taken their trunks and most of their belongings, and if both Nick and Wainright were overcome in the house, as now appears probable, they also were taken away, either dead or alive."

"It could have been done with a wagon from the end of the alley," said Patsy.

"Easily in the time they have had since I questioned the Hindu."

"Sure thing. That was three hours ago."

"Furthermore, if Theresa Gargoni is back of the whole business, her parents and that skunk, Giuseppe Cardenio, probably also are in the game. There would have been many hands to do the work, in that case, and it could have been done quickly."

"That's what has been done, all right," Patsy agreed. "It's up to us, now, to get on their trail and find out whether Nick and Wainright are dead or alive. It seems strange to me, if both have been killed, that the rascals took the trouble and risk of removing the bodies."

"They must have had some reason for it," Chick replied. "We'll see what the neighbors can tell us about the Hindu. You go to one house next door, while I go to the other. That done, we'll decide what steps must be taken. There's no getting around it, Patsy, that the case now looks black enough."

"As black as dock mud," said Patsy.

Chick led the way through the house, and a few minutes later he succeeded in arousing the people occupying one of the adjoining dwellings, leaving Patsy to inquire at the other.

A young man, half dressed and wearing a bath robe, came down to the door in response to Chick's summons. He was a thin-featured, sallow chap, with his hair in disorder and his beard and mustache uncombed.

"What's the trouble?" he asked huskily. "Why are you ringing me up at this hour?"

"Excuse me for doing so," Chick replied. "I am a detective, however, and suspect that a very serious crime has been committed in the next house. What can you tell me about the people living there?"

"Nothing."

"Don't you know anything about them?"

"Only that it's occupied by a Hindu, with a negro servant. But we don't know them. He's a fortune teller, or something of the kind."

"How long has he been there?"

"About three months."

"Who lives here?"

"My mother, Mrs. Clement, rents the house. My sister and I live with her. There are only three of us."

"Who is it, Archie? What does he want?"

These questions came from an upper floor, and Chick could see, looking through the partly open door and up the stairs, the heads and shoulders of two women who were gazing over the baluster rail. Both were in wrappers, with their hair in disorder, and they evidently had just risen from bed.

"Pardon me for disturbing your family, but it's a case of necessity," Chick said again, still addressing the young man. "Have you heard any disturbance in the next house during the night?"

"No, I have not. Have you, mother?"

"No, not a sound," said the elder woman, when questioned. "What's the trouble, Archie?"

"A crime has been committed in there."

"Oh, how horrible! It's what comes of having such neighbors."

"I heard noises out back, as if people were going out that way, but it was more than two hours ago," said the younger woman, whose face was half hidden by her abundance of loose, strikingly red hair.

"Did you see any one?" Chick inquired, gazing up at the couple.

"No, sir, I did not. I was in bed and I did not get up. I dropped asleep again and heard nothing more."

"We know nothing about the people next door," said the elder woman. "Absolutely nothing."

"Or about persons who have been going there?"

"Nothing whatever, sir. I'm sorry, but there is no information that we can give you."

"That's correct, sir," added the young man. "We never have fancied the couple living there and have had nothing to do with them."

Chick thanked him and descended the steps.

Patsy was approaching from the other adjoining dwelling.

They met in front of the Hakka house.

"Nothing doing," said Patsy tersely.

"Nothing doing there," Chick replied. "Something must be done, nevertheless, and it's up to us to get busy. We'll close the house temporarily, then go at this case like a bull at a five-bar gate."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GANG AND THE GAME.

Nick Carter never knew just how long he was unconscious after the brutal blow dealt him from behind. Only one with a head inured to hard knocks could have survived such a blow. It was aching and throbbing when he began to revive, awakening to a realization that something had happened.

Presently, when his mind became clearer, he sensed, with eyes still closed, that he was in a brightly lighted room. He heard voices, vaguely at first, as one hears when half awake. They sounded familiar, however, so familiar that they acted upon him like a stimulant. They awakened ugly recollections. He opened his eyes, and his gaze fell upon—Theresa Gargoni.

"Ha!" she cried shrilly. "He's finally coming out of dreamland. I told you he was worth a dozen dead men. He dies hard, this Carter. His skull is like ivory. Give him a sip of brandy, old man. I have something to say to him before we put out his light."

Nick gazed at her, then at her companions, and then around the room. He was amazed for a moment. He recalled all that had transpired in the quarters of the Hindu, and the change of scene was startling.

He was in a large, handsomely furnished room. An expensive carpet covered the floor. Attractive pictures adorned the walls. There were ornaments and bric-a-brac in profusion. Taking up the thread of consciousness so suddenly, the change from the somber rooms of Djal Hakka was like a stage transformation.

Nick found himself, moreover, bound securely to a massive oak chair, unable to move hand or foot. He was seated with his back to a wide fireplace. One of the doors of the room was closed, but on the right was a broad, open doorway leading into a rear room, partly hidden by a portière.

What chiefly surprised him, however, was the gang confronting him—the very crooks discussed with Chick and Patsy that morning, including the vengeful Italian girl, who had threatened him with death.

They were seated near by and intently watching him—Tony Gargoni and his wife, Theresa Gargoni, his daughter, and the sinister-eyed rascal who long had been their confederate, and who twice had been arrested by the detective, Giuseppe Cardenio. The surroundings indicated that they had prospered since their release from prison. This added to Nick's astonishment. He wondered where he was, how he came there, how he had fallen into the hands of this gang, and what had become of Djal Hakka and his negro servant.

His perplexity lasted only a few moments, however, while he pulled himself together. He straightened up a little in his bonds, frowning sternly, when Tony Gargoni approached him with a glass of brandy.

"I want none of that," he said curtly. "Drink it yourself, you rascal, if you wish to be rid of it."

"Good advice," Gargoni tersely growled, then drained the glass. "It's the only way I ever turn down a good thing. The less of it for you, Carter, the more for me."

"Don't want it, eh?" sneered Theresa. "You'll get much you don't want, Carter, yet will be forced to take, before we are through with you."

"Knowing you very well, you jade, I expect no less," Nick coldly retorted.

"You'll get all you expect—and more!"

"No more than you have warned me to expect."

"Ah! You received it, then. The stiletto sheath I sent you."

"Yes, I received it."

"Having robbed me of the handle, I resolved that you should have the entire weapon. You'll get the blade a little later—and get it where you'll not like it. Will you have a look at it?"

She spoke with a sneer, with a gleam of malevolent triumph in her piercing black eyes. She turned and took from a table near by a naked blade of steel, broken from its handle, in place of which a handkerchief was tightly twisted around it.

"Have a look," she cried, extending it. "Have a look—before you feel it."

Nick viewed it indifferently.

"Why do you delay?" he demanded coolly. "You'd better make a sure thing of it by striking at once. Delays are dangerous."

The woman laughed derisively. It was a cold, mirthless, mocking laugh, in which Gargoni and Cardenio grimly joined.

"Sandy to the limit, girl, isn't he?" growled the former.

"Much good that will do him," snapped Theresa. Then, quickly turning to Nick again, she added, with vicious asperity: "I told you I'd get you. I warned you what to expect. I told you I'd break even with you sooner or later, and even with that fool Lovell, who first employed you to run us down. I've done it, now, as I took an oath I would do. I've got you where I want you, Nick Carter, and——"

"Since you're inclined to be so communicative," Nick dryly interrupted, "you might tell me precisely how you got me. That Hindu faker, Djal Hakka, must be one of your confederates."

His hearers laughed again, all of them, in a way that instantly led Nick to suspect the truth. He glanced sharply around, and his suspicion was confirmed.

On a couch in the rear room lay a purple robe and turban. On a chair were the linen blouse and baggy trousers of the huge negro, also a crinkly gray wig and grizzled beard which, obviously, had served for a disguise.

"Oh, I see!" Nick's voice was as hard as flint. "That's the game you've been playing."

He knew, now, why Theresa Gargoni was wearing a loose wrapper, while Gargoni's massive figure was clad in a great bath robe, covering him from his huge shoulders to his slippered feet. He remembered, now, the falling waves of black hair from under the turban he had knocked from the head of the supposed Hindu.

"Yes, that's the game," nodded Theresa, grinning maliciously.

"You were the Hindu?"

"That's what."

"And Gargoni the negro?"

"Right again," said Theresa.

"H'm, I see!" said Nick, sternly eying her. "I knew you were clever and crafty, but hardly thought you capable of this."

"Oh, you'll find I'm your equal, Carter, before I'm through with you," she answered, with ominous assurance. "Yes, that's the game we've been playing. We've been at it for nearly four months. I don't mind telling you. You'll never be able to use the information; take my word for that."

"Possibly not," Nick allowed, bent upon having her continue.

"And a very good game it has proved to be," she went on mockingly. "We've made money with it."

"I observe that you appear to have prospered."

"Prospered is right," put in Gargoni, with a sinister nod of his huge head. "The girl is clever and the game is the best ever. We've got a bundle of money out of it."

"Including, no doubt, the batch of bonds belonging to Prentiss Wainright," said Nick.

"You bet we've got them," Theresa cried quickly. "We've got him, too, as well as you. I warned you what to expect. I told Lovell I'd get even with him and with the swell society girl for whom he turned me down after making love to me. I've done it, Carter, and I glory in it. We've got you. We've got Wainright. We've got his bonds. And I defy you, Carter, and your entire kennel of hounds to get us."

"Oh, we'll get you, Theresa, sooner or later," Nick replied, with quiet assurance. "You're clever, all right, but we'll get you."

"You will, eh?" she retorted, with a scornful sneer. "Well, you'll not live to see it. The world has seen the last of you, Carter, and the last of Wainright. We'll make sure of that."

"You forget that I may be traced to this house," Nick said, with provoking calmness, knowing it would evoke further disclosures from one of her resentful nature.

"Not to this house," Theresa snapped sharply.

"This isn't the house, then, in which you turned me down?" Nick questioned.

"Not much! If any of your push trace you to that house, they will find evidence of murder, your murder, committed by an unknown Hindu and his negro servant. They will get the credit of it, of having killed you, of having duped and got rid of Wainright, and of robbing him of his bonds. But the Hindu and the servant will have disappeared—and will never be found."

"Perhaps not," said Nick.

"We'll destroy every atom of evidence identifying us

as them," cried Theresa, with manifest pride in her artful knavery. "We'll wipe them out of existence. They alone will be suspected of the double murder, and while the police hunt high and low for them, we'll remain right here where we have been for months, and none will ever suspect us. Oh, I have it well planned—and well executed now."

"You are a bad girl, Theresa, very bad," said Nick. "Suppose one of my assistants were to call here, and——"

"Little good that would do him," she cut in derisively. "We'll be ready for him. Madame Clement and her son, Archie, as well as her very reserved and decorous daughter—that's me!" she glanced at corpulent Madame Gargoni and at Cardenio when she mentioned the others: "are known here as people of excellent character.

"We'll be ready for any of your push, Carter, and well enough disguised to preclude recognition. Don't you build any hopes on a visit of that kind. You're going to get yours this time, and nothing shall prevent it."

"I'll make sure of that, if she doesn't," snarled Gargoni, scowling.

"You will!" Nick exclaimed, gazing at the massive ruffian. "Take care, Gargoni, that you don't overleap your saddle and come down on your head. Unless you make good, mind you, I'll send you up the river for the rest of your natural life. Take that from me."

"Punk!" Cardenio put in contemptuously. "You'll never get the chance, Carter. You're all in. This is the last case you'll ever tackle."

"I shall at least have the satisfaction, then, of dying in the harness."

"Rats! You'll die in a tank, not a harness."

"With that broken stiletto, perhaps, thrust through my heart?"

"Yes, most likely," snapped Theresa, catching up the weapon again. "But I have still another use for this. I'm going to put it where Chick Carter will find it. I want him to know that I've made good, that I have squared accounts with you and with him. I'll risk his getting me. Only a Hindu can be convicted of this job—and no Hindu will ever be found. We'll plant evidence that will throw Chick Carter, or all the police push, off the track. We'll blind him so completely that——"

She stopped short. The blaze of vengeful hatred in her eyes changed to an expression of sudden apprehension. She held her breath for a moment, listening, then cried impetuously:

"An auto has stopped outside. Have they tracked us so quickly?"

"*Caramba!*"

With a snarl like that of a wolf, Gargoni snatched a handkerchief from his pocket and quickly bound it over the detective's mouth.

"Perdition! A shout or a signal whistle might ruin us," he fiercely growled.

Nick glanced at a clock on a mantel. It was just striking twelve.

Theresa Gargoni had darted out of the room and was gazing with gleaming eyes from an unlighted window, gazing out at a motor car then at the curbing several doors away. She saw Chick Carter alight, and approach the house of the supposed Hindu. She muttered an oath, a malediction, then rushed back and rejoined her confederates.

"Quick! This way! We must make a lightning change," she cried fiercely, seizing Gargoni by the arm and drawing him to the rear room. "It can be done in three minutes. In five we'll be ready for him. Come—hasten!"

Gargoni evidently grasped the situation, as well as the others, for he hurried with her into the rear room.

Madame Gargoni drew the portières, then hastened to assist them. Cardenio, fiery-eyed and scowling, remained watching the detective.

Nick also had heard the automobile. He could determine very nearly where it had stopped, which, with the immediate consternation and hurried movements of his captors, enabled him to size up the situation correctly.

"By Jove, it now is plain enough," he said to himself. "Chick and Patsy have suspected something. They already are getting in their work. They are looking for me, and have come to question the supposed Hindu. They have stopped a few doors west of this house.

"These rascals must occupy adjoining dwellings, then, with a secret passageway between them. I'm in the house east of the one in which I was knocked out. That jade has seen and recognized Chick, and she suspects his mission. Both she and Gargoni are making a quick shift, in order to receive him at the door of the other house and stave him off in some way. Will they succeed?"

Nick could only wait and listen. He heard the rascals working with precipitous haste in the rear room for several minutes, and then their receding steps when they departed.

Madame Gargoni entered, looking ghastly white and apprehensive.

Cardenio glanced at her and snarled:

"Keep an eye on this fellow. If he stirs, jab him with that stiletto. I'll go and lend them a hand, if it's needed."

He drew a revolver, while speaking, then turned and darted from the room.

Nick continued to wait and listen. He heard the automobile depart, an ominous sound, but his nerve was unshaken.

Ten minutes passed. Then Cardenio came hurrying into the room.

"It's all right, old woman," he cried exultantly. "They got rid of him without half trying. It's kid's play, after all, to blind these Carters."

"H'm, just so," thought Nick. "It was Chick, then, as I suspected."

The heavy tread of Tony Gargoni sounded in the adjoining hall. He strode into the room, followed by his daughter, both wearing the remarkably artistic make-up of the fictitious characters which they so cleverly had been playing. Viewing them in the glare of the electric light, even, Nick did not wonder that he had not recognized them.

There was a blaze of triumph in Theresa Gargoni's black eyes.

"I told you," she cried, quickly confronting Nick. "Build no hope upon what Chick Carter can accomplish. We've fooled him once and can fool him again. You're booked for your finish."

Then she swung round impetuously, throwing off her purple robe and turban, and sharply added:

"Move lively, old man, you and Cardenio. We must clean up in there and plant the necessary evidence. It must be done before those infernal guns pay us another visit. They may not show up again before morning, but we'll

take no chances. We'll get in our work at once. Stow this fool away, to begin with, and be quick about it. Stow him away until morning. We then shall have time to finish him."

CHAPTER IX.

A MESSAGE BY WIRE.

Nick Carter never knuckled to a situation. The more threatening it was, in fact, the stronger became his determination to master it.

Removed by Gargoni and Cardenio to a low loft directly under the roof of the house, forced into a rectangular, boxlike receptacle, the cover of which was adjusted and secured with a piece of joist, and there left bound hand and foot with tarred marline by the two ruffians—such was the situation in which Nick Carter found himself in the early hours of the morning.

One threatening remark made by Cardenio, however, enabled Nick to correctly size up his close quarters. Moving from side to side in the intense darkness, he could feel that it was about seven feet long, four feet in width and depth, and that it was partly lined with zinc.

"It's an empty water tank in the loft," he said to himself. "That rascal, Cardenio, said I should die in a tank, and this is what he meant. The miscreants have secured the cover with a piece of joist. Did they fear I might free myself from these ropes? I may be able, then, to accomplish it."

These thoughts ran through Nick's mind while he turned from side to side, sizing up the tank and how it was constructed.

He found that he had ample room in it to sit erect, and he also discovered near one end of it a round object which evidently extended above the roof. Sitting with his back to it, in order to examine it with his hands, which were bound behind him, he soon discovered what it was.

"An ordinary earthen pipe, evidently ventilating the plumbing service on the floors below," he muttered. "It must, in that case, protrude through the roof. Yes, by Jove, it does; I can hear the wind whistling across the end of it. H'm, what's that other noise?"

Nick listened to it intently for several moments. It came at intervals, then ceased, then came again. It was like the humming of a top.

"Ah, I have it!" he said to himself. "Telegraph wires running over the roof. The noise is caused by the wind blowing through them. They must hang very near the open end of this pipe, or I could not hear the sounds so plainly. By Jove, if I can smash the pipe with my heels, I may find a broken edge sharp enough to cut these ropes. It's well worth trying."

Nick did not defer undertaking it. Turning again and lying flat on his back, he began hammering the vertical pipe with his heels of his heavy boots.

Presently, after repeated efforts, he heard the snap and crack of the yielding earthenware. A few more powerful blows did the business. A fragment of the pipe crumbled, and then a great piece of it fell with a bang upon the floor of the tank.

"Humph!" Nick ejaculated. "So far so good. There's nothing like keeping busy and making the most of things. If these rats below don't hear me, I may yet contrive to turn the tables on them."

Nick twisted around once more and then examined the pipe with his fingers. It was about five inches in diameter. One broken, jagged end of it protruded about six inches above the floor of the tank. The upper part had fallen away, leaving only a piece extending through the top of the tank and the near roof.

Nick bent lower and gazed up through it.

He could see the clouded sky, the glow cast upon it by the myriad of city lights, and he could finally see several wires swinging to and fro just above the end of the pipe.

He discovered, moreover, that the pipe then was not more than eighteen inches long, and he inhaled with feelings of relief the refreshing wind that came through it.

"By Jove, if I had a lineman's outfit and could get connected with one of those wires, I should bring this affair to a quick and satisfactory termination," he said to himself. "But I might as well wish for the moon. I'll try to free myself, at least, and see whether there is any way out of this infernal trap."

Finding quite a sharp and sawlike edge on the lower piece of the pipe, Nick brought the bonds on his wrists to bear upon it, and he then began to saw the marline to and fro across it. It was awkward and difficult work, a task that took time, and that scratched and tore his skin until the blood dripped from his fingers.

Nick finally accomplished his object, nevertheless, and with grim satisfaction he felt one of the ropes relax and then break under the strain he immediately brought upon it. The work then was comparatively easy. In a very few minutes he succeeded in liberating his hands, and then with a piece of the pipe he severed the cords around his ankles.

"Now, by gracious, there'll be rough-house, all right, when those rascals show up," he grimly muttered. "Die in a tank, eh? We'll see about that. I may not be able to get out, but I'll be ready to put up a wicked battle with the first miscreant who pokes his nose in here."

The long June day had broken, and through the pipe came the first signs of light, just enough to enable Nick to make a visual inspection of the interior of the tank.

He soon found that escape from it unaided was impossible. It would be impossible for him to remove the cover. The zinc-lined sides and floor were impregnable. He had been robbed of the only articles he might have used to any advantage, his knife and revolver. Only articles of a less threatening character had been left in his pockets.

"The outlook certainly is not promising," he soliloquized, reclining on the tank floor after his vain efforts to force up the cover. "I guess I'm booked to remain here until Gargoni pays me a visit. He shall meet with a warm welcome, at all events, and the finish may not be what he expects. Broad daylight, eh? It must be about six o'clock. I wonder where those wires run to. I can reach them, I think. By Jove, I wonder if I can use them to any advantage."

Nick then was gazing up through the pipe at the sunlit sky and the several wires, and thrusting his arm through the pipe, he found that he could grasp the nearest of the wires, his entire hand protruding above the opening. He could also feel the sweep of the wind and the warmth of the sun upon it.

He withdrew his arm and fell to thinking.

For nearly an hour he continued to rack his brain, striving to hit upon some way by which he could make use of the wires, and all the while he lay flat on the floor of the tank, gazing up through the pipe at the azure sky.

Suddenly one of the wires, the only one he was able to reach, moved quite violently from side to side, swaying more than any of the others.

Nick started involuntarily and watched it sharply.

"What's the meaning of that?" he muttered.

Again, after a few moments, the same agitation was observable, and then he hit upon the cause of it.

"By Jove, I have it!" flashed through his mind. "A lineman is at work on that wire. He must be on the roof of another building. If on this one, I should have heard him. The movement of the wire indicates that he is on a building south of this one. By gracious, I wonder which way the wind is blowing. I can easily find out."

Wetting a finger, Nick again thrust his arm through the pipe, then turned his hand until the dampness gave him the exact direction of the wind.

"From the north," he muttered. "Every old salt knows that trick. Every youngster who flies a kite, moreover, knows still another—that the wind will carry a scrap of paper up the kite string. Why not along a wire, then? We'll see."

Nick was far from idle while the above observations passed through his mind. He tore a leaf from his notebook, then slit it about halfway down and tore a small round piece from the middle.

Below the hole he thus formed, he wrote with a pencil:

"Rush this, or telephone the message below, to the residence of Nick Carter, detective, Madison Avenue.

"Raid next house east of Hakka dwelling. Occupied by Gargoni gang. Theresa is Hakka; Gargoni, the negro. Find me confined in tank in the loft. NICK."

Nick knew there would be no need of more explicit directions, providing the paper fell into the hands of any intelligent person. He was puzzled for a moment, nevertheless, as to how to prevent the leaf from falling from the wire.

"Ah, I have it," he muttered abruptly. "A postage stamp will do the business."

He had one in the notebook. Wetting it, he stuck half of the stamp on one side of the slit he had made in the leaf. Then, thrusting his arm through the pipe he slipped the wire through the slit and into the round hole, and then closed the slit with the remaining half of the moistened stamp.

Not until he withdrew his arm and gazed up through the pipe, of course, could he see what he had accomplished.

The leaf was, as he hoped, hanging squarely on the wire.

While he gazed up at it, watching it anxiously, a gust of wind struck it—and it sped away and vanished.

Nick dropped back upon his elbow to await the result—or the coming of Tony Gargoni.

CHAPTER X.

CONVERGING FORCES.

Chick Carter, at seven o'clock that morning, was making a few hurried preparations for leaving home and returning to the Hakka dwelling.

Patsy Garvan was absent on work pertaining to the case, but was expected to return at any moment.

"Tell him where I have gone, Joseph, when he comes in, and to join me there as quickly as possible," Chick directed, addressing their manservant. "You'd better ring up Danny and have him here with the car. He can bring Patsy up there, and we may need it later. Some quick work must be done this morning."

"I'll do so," said Joseph, whose grave face evinced his anxiety. "I wish I might do more, sir."

Chick did not reply, but seized his hat and hurried from the house. He was deep in thought. He had, since leaving the Hakka dwelling soon after daybreak, been weighing several facts noted during his earlier investigations, but the full significance of which had been overlooked in the press of other and more obtrusive circumstances.

Chick had noticed that neither the stove, nor any of the kitchen utensils appeared to have been recently used. He had observed that the china closet contained only a few inferior pieces of crockery, and that a sideboard in the dining room was quite destitute of the ordinary equipments. He had recalled, too, that neither the bedroom occupied by Hakka, nor that of his negro servant, looked as if they had been in constant use during the three months the couple were said to have been living in the house.

Consideration of these points had given rise in Chick's mind to suspicions that hit very near the truth, and which were sending him back to the house, of which he had retained the key, to make a few additional investigations.

"The rascals might, of course, have been taking their meals outside, but they certainly ought to have been sleeping in the house. All things taken together, it looks very much as if they had been doing neither. If not, where have they been eating and sleeping? The mysterious escape of the woman I encountered, moreover, in view of these new suspicions, is certainly significant. There may be a secret way from Hakka's house to the one adjoining it. That Madame Clement may not be as ignorant as she pretended. She admitted that she has been living there only a few months, or about the same time Hakka has occupied the next house, and that also is significant. Those three rooms, moreover, are on the side of the hall adjoining her house. I'll make a more thorough inspection of the dividing wall. I've got it on me good and strong that there's something wrong with it."

Such were the suspicions and designs that were taking Chick back to the Hakka dwelling.

It then was quarter past seven.

Casting a furtive eye at the windows of Madame Clement's dwelling, at none of which he could discover any observer, Chick let himself into the adjoining house. It was silent and deserted. The somber paraphernalia of the supposed Hindu still draped the walls with funereal aspect. The rooms seemed dark, cold, and dismal.

Chick already felt sure that the woman who had so mysteriously eluded him had done so from the rear room, in which direction he had heard her flee, and to that he at once turned his attention.

He began with an examination of the papered wall, then that of the china closet, but his search proved as futile as before. The paper was intact, as well as the plastered wall of the closet.

Turning back, Chick then began a thorough inspection

of the dumb-waiter well. It was amply wide for a person to enter it, and the opening reached nearly to the floor of the room.

He found that the back wall of it was of sheathing, directly adjoining the next house, but he could find no crack or crevice indicating that a secret door existed.

"If there is one, it's very cleverly constructed and concealed," he said to himself. "I'll try sounding the wall."

He drew out his knife with which to do so—then suddenly paused.

A sound had reached his ears, a sound too faint to have been in the Hakka house, a sound which certainly came from the other.

It was the sudden, insistent ringing of a doorbell.

"By Jove, I'm on the right track," though Chick, still pausing to listen. "That sound comes through this sheathing. It's only a thin partition, at most, and there may be some way of removing it. I'll see what——"

Chick heard, however, instead of saw.

The ringing of the bell was suddenly followed by another sound, far more ominous and convincing—the sharp, spiteful crack of a revolver.

The cause of these disturbances was—Patsy Garvan.

Arriving home about five minutes after Chick had departed, Patsy was about to enter the house when, leaping out of a hurriedly approaching taxicab, a young man rushed up the steps and shouted excitedly:

"Say! Is this Nick Carter's residence? Do you belong here?"

Patsy turned and looked at him, obviously the lineman of some telegraph or telephone company, for he was in working clothes and with climbers still attached to his legs.

"Yes, this is Carter's residence," he replied. "I belong here, and am one of his assistants."

"You're the man I want, then," cried the other.

"What's the trouble?"

"Read this! It speaks for itself, I reckon."

And the lineman thrust into Patsy's hand the leaf Nick had torn from his notebook, a scrap of paper slit down the middle, and to which a torn postage stamp still was cleaving.

Patsy Garvan read with little more than a glance the startling communication it contained.

"Great guns!" he cried, with countenance lighting wondrously. "Where did you get this?"

"It came to me by wire."

"Wire?"

"That's what. I was repairing a line on a roof up in Fifty-second Street, and I saw this punctured leaf blowing along the wire. It was coming toward me, and soon was near enough for me to nail it. I read it, and then—well, I've lost no time in getting here. You can bet on that."

"How long ago did you receive it?"

"Not more than ten minutes."

"Say, what's your name?" demanded Patsy abruptly.

"Joe Marvin."

"Well, Joe Marvin, you call here at noon to-day and you'll get a good fat wad for what you've done. No, no, don't say you want nothing. Take a tip from me and nail all that comes your way."

"But——"

"You'll have to take it, and that's all there is to it," Patsy forcibly insisted. "You've done us a turn well worth all you'll get. Now don't argue, nor detain me with questions. I've got work that admits of no delay. I say, Joseph, where's Chick?"

Joseph had appeared at the door to learn what was going on.

"He left for the Hakka house about ten minutes ago," he replied hurriedly. "He wants you to come right up there. Here's Danny with the car."

"Eureka!" shouted Patsy, thrusting Nick's message into Joseph's hand. "Read that. It will ease your mind. But no Hakka house for me. It's the house next door for mine. Let her go, Danny, at top speed, The West Forty-seventh Street police station first, and then to the corner of that block we visited last night. We'll fix the rascals this time, take my word for it."

Patsy flew down the steps and into the automobile while he was speaking, and in another moment the car was speeding up Madison Avenue on its way to the station house.

Ten minutes later, in company with half a dozen blue-coated officers, Patsy arrived at the end of the block in which the houses of crime were located. Within another minute four of the policemen were so stationed that the escape of the criminals would be impossible. Then, with the other two officers at his heels, Patsy hastened to the house of the pretended Madame Clement and rang the bell.

It was answered by the woman herself—Madame Gargoni, in disguise.

Patsy did not stand upon ceremony.

"Nail this woman," he cried, brushing by her. "Put her in irons, and then——"

A shriek from the end of the hall, mingled with a leonine roar from a man at the head of the stairs, interrupted Patsy.

The shriek came from Theresa Gargoni, the roar from her herculean father. Both had instantly grasped the situation, both recognizing Patsy, and the fact that they probably were hopelessly cornered.

Theresa, while she shrieked, darted into the dining room, bent upon making her escape, if possible, through the next house. She ran to the dumb-waiter well, pressed a spring concealed in the woodwork, which instantly released a sliding door in the sheathing. It flew quickly to one side and revealed—Chick Carter, gazing at her from the dining room of the next house.

She recoiled with a piercing scream, with every feature distorted, and whipped out a stiletto from her blouse.

"You devil!" she shrieked. "Let me pass, or I'll kill you! Let me——"

"Look out!" Chick shouted. "You'll be shot from behind."

She turned one swift glance over her shoulder—but that was enough.

Chick leaped through the opening between the two rooms. His arms closed around the venomous vixen, his hands gripping her wrists, and in another moment he had her upon her knees, her arms behind her, and a pair of handcuffs circling her wrists.

Even then, however, Theresa Gargoni did not submit. She fought tooth and nail, wrenching the irons with a violence that threatened to tear her arms from their sockets, and all the while with her livid, froth-flecked lips pouring forth threats and maledictions that would have chilled the blood of any ordinary hearer.

"You devil—y [illegible] iterated, when Chick finally jerked her to her [illegible] and kicked her stiletto under the table. "I'll kill you for this! I'll kill you for——"

"You'll not kill anybody," Chick sharply interrupted. "You've reached the end of your rope."

He seized her again while speaking, and before she could offer further resistance, he thrust her into a near closet and closed and locked the door.

Chick took this step for only one reason. There was a gun fight in progress in the hall, and he thought he might be needed.

CHAPTER XI.

HAND TO HAND.

Though the entrance of Patsy Garvan and two policemen had aroused the tigerlike nature of Theresa Gargoni, the effect upon her burly, fiery-tempered father was even more terrible. It seemed to let loose all that was devilish and brutal in him, and there was little else. Half dressed on the stairs, to which he had been drawn by the ringing of the bell, he no sooner saw the intruders than, venting one furious roar, he snatched a revolver from his hip pocket and sent a bullet at Patsy Garvan's head.

It missed him by barely an inch, and a splinter flew from the door casing.

One officer rushed Madame Gargoni into the near parlor and hastened to put her in irons.

The other policeman, seeing Cardenio dart from the dining room and head for the back door of the house, rushed through the hall in pursuit of him.

Patsy was left to meet the situation single-handed. Gargoni had fired again and missed, partly owing to the elevation from which he aimed, for he then was at the very top of the hall stairs

"Cut that out," yelled Patsy, reaching for his revolver. "I'll let daylight into you. I can drop you with a single shot."

Gargoni's only reply was another bullet.

It whistled by Patsy's head, and his revolver came into play.

Bang!

The bullet tore through a corner of the wall, back of which Gargoni had instantly retreated, and a shower of fine plaster mingled with the smoke then filling the hall.

Gargoni peered out and fired again.

The ball went flat against the lintel post at the base of the stairs.

Patsy had crouched back of it and was seeking the shelter of the balusters and rail, at the same time watching to get another crack at the ruffian.

Gargoni glanced at his smoking weapon and saw that he had emptied all but one chamber. Only one bullet remained. He did not delay to reload. He uttered a wolfish snarl, fiercely beat his forehead for an instant, then turned and rushed up the stairs leading to the upper floor—and the loft.

"Carambo!" he growled, deep in his pulsing throat. "He shall have the last. I'll end him, curse him, if no other. I'll pay him. I'll pay him in full. I'll kill him if I go to the chair for it."

He plunged up the stairs at top speed, a madman in his wrath.

Patsy did not see him through the smoke. He realized that discretion was imperative. He thought that the desperate rascal was merely waiting for him to break cover, and he knew that a fatal wound might follow any hazardous move on his part. He waited and watched and listened, therefore, for several moments.

Gargoni, in the meantime, growling like an infuriated bear, made his way to the loft.

Nick Carter heard him coming. He had heard the fusillade below, and he readily knew what occasioned it. He heard the ruffian hurl aside the joist with which the cover of the tank was secured—and Nick, then crouching in his close quarters, was ready for him.

Gargoni threw the cover aside, then not only peered into the tank, but also thrust in the revolver for an immediate shot.

Nick saw the weapon and beat it aside.

Gargoni's hand brought up against the edge of the tank, and the blow caused his finger to press the trigger of the weapon. The report rang like thunder in the detective's ears. But the bullet, the miscreant's last bullet, passed over Nick's shoulder and through the opposite end of the tank.

Gargoni uttered a roar of rage and aimed a blow at Nick's head, but Nick's clenched hand moved too quickly. He uppercut the Italian with one terrific blow, and the latter's huge figure reeled backward and away from the tank.

Nick arose to leap out.

Gargoni dropped his empty weapon, and under a first impulse to seek safety in flight, he bounded up some low steps leading to a skylight in the flat, tarred, and pebbled roof. With a single sweep of his brawny arm he threw open the skylight, then scrambled through it and gained the roof.

Nick was out and after him in less than three seconds, with as ugly a gleam in his eyes as mortal man had ever seen there. When he reached the roof, Gargoni was nearing the skylight of the third house east, evidently bent upon making his escape through the dwelling.

Nick darted after him like a terrier after a rat.

Gargoni found the skylight secured within. He could not open it. He kicked out the glass, reached through the sashes, and tried vainly to find the bolts, and then he glanced up, fiery-eyed, and saw the detective rushing toward him. He was up in an instant and warding the blow Nick aimed at his head.

"Give it up, Gargoni," Nick cried coolly. "There's nothing in it for you. I'm here to get you."

"Get me!" Gargoni roared. "Not get me, but go with me! No bolts and bars for me. I'll go—but you go with me! Over the edge of the roof."

He rushed like a mad bull upon Nick, while speaking, and then the two men were grappled in a terrific struggle.

Nick realized that he was booked for a desperate battle. Though a powerful man himself, one who could easily have overcome any ordinary antagonist, he was outweighed by Gargoni fully eighty pounds, a man with the muscles of a bull and the sinews of a horse.

Nick had only the advantage of skill and staying qualities.

For half a minute the two men swayed to and fro like oaks in a gale. Gargoni wrenched and tugged, trying to drag Nick to the edge of the roof, some twelve feet away.

Nick jabbed his heels into the pebbly roof and sagged back, jerking the ruffian toward him. Gargoni's feet slipped on the pebbles and he fell to his knees.

Nick's right fist swung round and caught the ruffian a terrific blow on the jaw. It would have sent any ordinary man into dreamland, but Gargoni did not appear to feel it, for he grappled Nick around the waist, fiercely struggling up, and then swung the detective from his feet.

It deprived the latter of his leverage—it was a thrilling moment, but Nick was equal to the situation, however. He thrust both hands against the Italian's face, then forced his head back till the bones of his neck snapped and cracked. He staggered, catching his breath and losing his waist hold, and Nick dropped back on his feet.

Then came another blow, and blood trickled from Gargoni's mouth, but he never faltered. He swung round the detective, gasping and snarling, and got above Nick on the roof. Then he rushed and grappled again, and tried to force Nick toward the edge.

A yell came from a policeman in the alley, but neither of the battling gladiators heard it.

Nick braced himself to withstand the assault, but his feet slipped on the round pebbles.

Gargoni vented an oath and forced him back a yard or more, and Nick caught sight of the ground and fences sixty feet below—and of a brick chimney some six feet away.

A sharper gleam leaped up in his eyes.

Shrieks and screams now were falling upon his ears, cries from scores of horrified observers at the windows of the opposite dwellings.

Nick yielded a little, purposely, and a snarl of vicious triumph broke from Gargoni. Both then were within six feet of the edge of the roof.

Nick then turned slightly. One of his legs glided back of those of his opponent. Then came a quick twist, and their hips crossed. Then with an upward heave, an effort into which he threw all of his strength, Nick raised the massive ruffian from his feet, turned his heels in the air, then hurled him headlong against the brick chimney.

Gargoni's skull struck the corner of it. He dropped with a thud upon the roof—and did not stir. He was down and out.

A triumphant shout fell upon Nick's ears. Patsy Garvan, revolver in hand, was running toward him.

"Bully for you, chief!" he cried exultantly. "Fine work—fine! You've got him, all right."

"Have we got the others?" Nick calmly inquired.

"Sure thing! All of them."

"There's little more to it, then," smiled the detective.

Nick was right. One hour later the four members of the Gargoni gang were in cells, and two months later they were sentenced under the habitual criminal act to twenty years in Sing Sing. They were to remain there, too, and the Carters saw no more of them.

In one of the back rooms of the house, secured to a bed and in a state of nervous prostration, old Mr. Wainright was found, and also the bonds of which the rascals had robbed him. He recovered later, however, and was little the worse for his trying experience.

Nick Carter's deductions in the case, as already set forth, were entirely correct. The gratitude and relief of Tom Lovell and his wife were all one might have expected, and the generous reward for [illegible] done them swelled the bank accounts of the detectives a corresponding degree. It was what Nick termed a quick case and a profitable one.

THE END.

In next week's issue, No. 40, out June 14th, will be found "Nick Carter's Three-cornered Chase; or, How Patsy Looped the Loop." Nick ran up against a clever and daring game in the strange burglary in the home of a wealthy banker. The trail was as plain as day. In fact it was too plain to fool Nick. Patsy has one of the most thrilling experiences of his life when he "loops the loop."

Arrested at the Tomb;

Or, SHERIDAN KEENE ON A CURIOUS CASE.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Before taking up the case at hand, Amos K. Berkeley, president of the Federal Life Insurance Company, of Boston, explains to Sheridan Keene, the detective, that in the year 1903, the life of one Thomas Gaylord, of Worcester, Massachusetts, was insured for $5,000. That shortly afterward Gaylord died of consumption, and his wife collected the insurance. William Bennett had acted as the agent for the insurance company. Mr. Berkeley had suspected that there had been crooked work of some kind, but he had been unable to prove it.

Taking up the case in hand, Mr. Berkeley tells Keene that one Calvin Miller, of Bangor, Maine, was insured for $100,000, and that he had learned that the widow of Thomas Gaylord had become the wife of Miller. Also that Bennett, who had been discharged by the Federal Company, was living in Maine, and had been instrumental in insuring Miller in other companies.

Keene goes to Bangor, and, upon his arrival, learns that Calvin Miller has just been drowned while in the company of an employee, David Graff, whom Mrs. Miller had claimed as a cousin, and had persuaded her husband to employ.

A body, which is assumed to be that of John Brown, is found. Convinced that Graff and Mrs. Miller have conspired to murder Calvin Miller, to get his insurance, Keene, disguised as a tough sport, and, taking the name of Bill Kelly, calls at the Miller home, to which he is admitted by Graff.

CHAPTER VI—(*Continued.*)

The room was brightly lighted, but every curtain was closely drawn. The dining table was laid about as usual; yet some of the pretty china had been roughly pushed out of place, and only a decanter of liquor and several glasses appeared to have been used.

A stout, florid man was seated at one end of the table, whom Keene recognized to be William Bennett, and who was hurriedly concealing a number of insurance policies, which evidently had been under discussion.

Nell Miller was seated at one end of the table, dressed in a loose woolen wrapper, and with her painted features clouded by an ugly frown. She stared up at Keene's hangdog countenance, when he entered, and cried harshly, in response to Graff's blunt question:

"Know him—I should say not! What did you bring him out here for?"

"Oh, well, I know you, Nell Miller," interposed Keene, with menacing emphasis; "or I did when you were Nellie

Gaylord, so it's all the same! And I knew your husband, too, Tom Gaylord, the butcher."

The woman turned ghastly for an instant, and started to her feet, crying angrily:

"What do you mean, you scoundrel, by——"

"Oh, sit down," growled Keene, giving his heavy stick an ugly wave, and pushing a chair to the side of the table opposite her. "Don't go off your perch trying to put up a front against me. I'm not half the scoundrel any one of you makes out to be, and I'm here on business—see!"

"You blackguard!" Graff now furiously cried, springing forward with upraised hand. "What do you mean by——"

"Oh, I mean just what I say!" interrupted the detective, suddenly thrusting a revolver under the very nose of the enraged man. "You sit down, too, and don't kick over the traces. I have come here to say something to youse guys, and you're going to hear it—see!"

Nell Miller had dropped back in her chair, dismayed for a moment by their resolute visitor's threatening aspect; and even Dave Graff, who was by no means a coward, shrank from the ominous muzzle of Sheridan Keene's ready weapon.

"Who are you, anyway?" demanded Bennett, quickly seeing the folly of immediate opposition. "And what do you want here?"

"Now you're talking sense, and not through your hat," growled Keene, coolly taking a seat opposite Nell Miller.

"My name's Kelly, and I used to hang out up Worcester way about seven years back," he went on, with a grim display of intimidation.

"Up Worcester way!" gasped the woman.

"Cert, up Worcester way."

"Who is the other party you said was on to some game?" Graff demanded angrily. "What's the meaning of this outrageous insult?"

"Oh, I am the party, and none other," retorted Keene, with a self-satisfied leer. "You hold your hosses, Dave, till I am ready to tell you. You'll know soon enough who I am, and what I know of the little game you're now pulling off. And I am here to have a hand in it, and to get my little bit—see!"

"You'll get an ounce——"

"I will get just what I am after, Dave; and not an ounce of lead, nor any other kind of knock-out drops," interrupted Keene, with a quick display of savage defiance. "You sit down there, now, and hear what I have to say."

"Sit down," interposed Nell Miller, with a significant glance.

Keene saw murder, even in her fiery eyes, as well as in the angry face of the man who now obeyed her; but he felt equal to handling the entire party without assistance.

"Did you say you once lived in Worcester?" Nell Miller now demanded, glaring sharply across the table at the detective's grim face, as if striving to recall it.

"That's what I said, Nell."

"You're insolently familiar, sir!"

"I can very well be, knowing what I know. Ain't you Nell to your friends?"

"You're no friend of mine."

"You'll find I've been."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I will tell you," said Keene, coolly pouring himself a drink from the decanter. "I used to work for old Doctor Varney, as hostler, seven years ago, Nell. Here's looking at yer!"

As Keene tossed off the liquor, he observed the quick, significant glances between the three, and he knew they now were beginning to suspect his seeming purpose.

But this was precisely what he wanted.

"Suppose you did work for Doctor Varney," cried Nell Miller sharply. "What's that to me?"

"You'd have thought it was something to you, if I'd told all I knew at the time."

"Told what?" frowned the woman, still very pale.

"Don't you know, Nell?"

"No, I don't! I know only that you're an insolent ruffian!"

Keene laughed grimly, and winked coolly at Dave Graff, chiefly to make sure that he was about to do nothing by which he might be caught unawares.

"Well, Nell, I know it all," cried Keene. "I know all about you and Dave Graff, and the trick you pulled off up in Worcester; and I knowed it at the time—see!"

"What are you talking about?" Graff again cried angrily. "What trick?"

"The trick by which you and yonder covey, and Nell there, beat the insurance company out of a good, fat thing."

"You're mad!" thundered Graff furiously.

"No, it's you guys that are mad," grinned Keene significantly, knocking the edge of the table with his heavy cane. "You are mad because I'm on to your bowling, and now mean to have my little bit. I've waited for it long enough, haven't I?"

Keene saw Dave Graff flash a quick, significant look at Nell Miller's white face; and then Graff sternly cried:

"Address me, you scoundrel, and cease threatening that woman. How dare you come here in such a way as this, and with these outrageous intimations?"

Keene swung round in his chair, and pointed his cane straight at the breast of the irate speaker.

"Because I know they are true, Mr. Graff," he retorted, with ugly decisiveness. "And I knowed it at the time."

"Knew what at the time?"

"That you beat the insurance company out of five thousand dollars."

"How did I beat it?"

"By getting out a policy in the name of Thomas Gaylord, the butcher, who knew nothing at all about it."

"You are wrong about that."

"No, I'm not wrong, and your own face shows it," cried Keene, with subdued ferocity.

"Where were you at the time, that you got this absurd idea?"

"I was Varney's hostler, and I was in his back office when you were examined in the name of Tom Gaylord. You see, Dave Graff, I knew Tom Gaylord as well as you did; and it didn't take a very long head to tumble to the whole game you had in mind to play. I heard Doctor Varney question you from start to finish, and I knew——"

"See here, Dave!" Bennett suddenly interrupted; "this infernal scoundrel knows too much for his own good, as well as for ours."

Graff paid no attention to the interruption.

He now was anxious, most of all, to learn precisely of what information this ostensible ruffian was possessed.

"If you were in Varney's back office at the time, and suspected the whole scheme," he now cried, with his dark features flushed and distorted; "why did you not disclose it?"

"What could I have made by doing that, you fool?" de-

manded Keene, with scornful emphasis. "I wanted my finger in the pie, if there was one to be cut, and I allowed I could get my little bit out of you and Nell there; but I got left in that, for the two of you lit out of town before I could nail you."

"That was the reason, was it?"

"That was just it, and nothing else," nodded Keene, drumming grimly with his cane on the table edge. "But I'm glad of it, now!"

"Glad of it?"

"That's what I said."

"Why so?"

"Because I'll now make sure of getting a bigger bit!" grinned Keene, with a threatening flash of his scowling eyes.

"What do you imply by that?" demanded Graff darkly.

"Can't you guess?"

"No; I'm not good at guessing the riddles of such fellows as you."

"Well," explained Keene, with a significant leer, "since I've caught you doing a bigger job, my bit will have to be bigger!"

This ominous declaration, made with a significance that would be quite indescribable, sent the color from the face of his every hearer.

Nell Miller half started from her chair, her teeth showing between her parted gray lips, and but for Graff's interference she would have given voice to her sudden horror and dismay.

"Sit down there, Nell, and keep quiet!" the man forcibly cried, rudely pushing her back to her chair, and seeming finally to grasp the needs of the threatening situation. "Leave this ruffian to me!"

"Don't call hard names," put in the detective, without rising from his chair. "That won't help you out any."

"What do you mean by bigger game?" demanded Graff, turning sharply toward him.

"Just what I say, Mr. Graff."

"Explain yourself."

"That's easy! When I saw by the papers the sudden death of this man Miller, and read about you and Nell, I allowed that I'd found you again, Dave, and that you were up to another game—see! So I came down here to look it over."

"To look what over?"

"The scheme you've been working, of course," cried Keene. "Oh, it's plain enough to me now, Dave, since I find the same old agent here with you."

"What is plain to you? Do you mean to imply——"

"No, I don't imply anything!" cried Keene, as if angrily resenting the other's pretended ignorance. "I don't imply it! I come right down flat-footed, and say it for a fact."

"Say what?"

"That you have done up Miller, as you doubtless did Tom Gaylord seven years ago, sir."

"Silence that man, Dave!" Mrs. Miller screamed, with an irrepressible outburst of terrible passion. "My God! don't you hear what he is saying? Will you listen to——"

"Yes, he'll listen, and so will you, Nell Miller!" interrupted the detective, with grim ferocity. "Don't think I've not got my eye on you all, for I have! If you try any desperate move against me, somebody'll get hurt! I am here for a hand in this game of yours, and I mean to have it."

"Keep quiet, Nellie!" commanded Graff. "Leave the fellow to me."

"Shut him up, then, or I——"

"Silence, I say! What do you mean, Kelly, if that's your name, by saying that we have done up Calvin Miller?"

"That's what I mean, Mr. Graff, just as you put it."

"But that is absurd! Everybody knows it is."

"I'm the one who happens to know it isn't," retorted Keene pointedly.

"Miller was drowned."

"Yes, and by your hand, most likely!"

"You——"

"Oh, don't try to bluff me down, Dave! You've played quite a clever game down here, and it'll go all right with those who don't know you as well as I do. It was all very slick, your tumbling Miller into the river at a time when no one would notice, and then springing in an alarm as though 'twere an accident. But I am on to all that, Mr. Graff, and more to go with it!"

Dave Graff stood motionless on the floor, his face utterly void of its normal color, his glowing eyes fixed steadily on the grim face of the resolute speaker.

He thought he now knew what the ruffian's object was in coming there, and he was figuring how to discover just what he had learned, and how he could manage to get the best of him if it came to a physical encounter.

"You think I did that, do you?" he demanded, with a voice so hoarse and strained that it betrayed the stress of feeling he was striving hard to hide.

"I know you did it, Dave!"

"You are wrong."

"Oh, no, I'm not! And I'm not wrong in saying that you and Bennett, and Nell, there, are up to another scheme to get his insurance. D'ye mean to tell me, Dave Graff, that 'twas Miller's body you fished out of the river, when not a man in the town would have believed it could be found?"

"Of course it was Miller's body! Whose else could it have been?"

"And did the clothes it wore belong to Miller? Or were they some you bought at a store down in Bangor? You see, Dave, I've been looking up the case, with an eye to getting my finger in the mess, and I'm on to your pitching."

Graff had staggered slightly, and now grew paler than ever.

The woman opposite the detective suddenly dropped a napkin ring, which she had been viciously fingering, and it rolled off the table and fell to the floor. She pushed back her chair and stooped under the table as if to reach the ring, but within the fraction of a second her real design was apparent.

Sheridan Keene felt himself held fast by both legs, and jerked half out of his chair, while the voice of Nell Miller rang with a scream through the room:

"Seize him, Dave! I've got him by the legs! Secure him, for God's sake!"

It was an artful move, and one well worthy a most desperate and designing woman.

It caught Sheridan Keene from an unexpected quarter, and his legs were held as in a vise.

The movement threw his chair from beneath him. He fell with a crash to the floor, and his revolver was sent flying from his hand.

Instantly both Bennett and Dave Graff were upon him

and crushing him down, despite his furious struggle against odds of three to one. Against these odds, even he possibly might have conquered had not a sudden, sharp blow from his own weapon laid him senseless on the dining-room floor.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESORT OF DESPERATION.

Half an hour after Sheridan Keene's utterly unexpected mishap, the three criminals who now had him completely at their mercy, and who had left him bound and gagged upon the cellar floor, were again seated in the Miller dining room.

The spirit of utter desperation was pictured in the face of one and all.

Although his disguise had been so perfect as to escape detection, it was plain to all that this stranger, who so suddenly had turned up in their midst and confronted them with their crimes, had in some way discovered far more than was consistent with their safety.

"How to get rid of him is the question!" was Nell Miller's bitter exclamation, uttered a moment after Bennett and Dave Graff returned from bearing Keene's senseless form to the basement.

"Get rid of him?" faltered Bennett, pouring himself a drink to steady his shaking nerves. "Must that be done, also?"

"Must it!" cried Nell Miller, who was by far the most desperate of the lot, having the most at stake. "Of course it must be done! It's not a question of whether it must, but how it must!"

"You are right in that, Nell," Graff declared, binding a bruised hand received in the late encounter. "We're in a bad scrape, as the thing now looks. This ruffianly fellow, whoever he is, must be put out of our way."

"Yet he spoke as if willing to take a hand in the game, if he could secure a part of the stake," suggested Bennett doubtfully. "I don't wholly fancy sending another man to kingdom come. Wouldn't it be safe enough to buy his silence, if it can be done?"

"By thunder—no!" cried Graff angrily. "Bought silence is never reliable. There's no trusting a scoundrel of his stamp. We should be safe only while his money lasted, and then it would be the same story again."

"That's just the size of it, Dave," said Nellie Miller grimly. "There is only one safe way of fixing him, and I'll agree only to that one. He took his life in his hands to intimidate us, and his life must be the price of his failure."

"It shall be, Nell."

"There's too much at stake for any other chance to be taken. Who he really is, and where he comes from is what beats me."

"It don't make much difference," said Graff bluntly. "He certainly has discovered our designs, and means to make the most of it."

"His discovery must cost him his life, then," Nellie Miller forcibly insisted. "What need of delay? Delays are dangerous!"

"It may be just as dangerous were we to kill him in this house," retorted Graff. "He's safe enough for the present."

"But why dangerous?"

"He may have been seen coming here, for one reason."

"That's true."

"Or suppose anything should turn up later, and that this house should be searched. There must be no evidence here of anything like murder. Bloodstains sometimes tell an ugly story, Nell, you know."

"Besides," cried Bennett, whose countenance had grown very dismal over the prospect, "the body would have to be removed from here, and it might not prove very easy to transport it and dispose of it without being seen."

"I should say not," added Graff decisively.

"Speaking of the body, Dave," the woman now cried, with a sudden start, "I have the very idea."

"About what?"

"How it best may be done! It can be accomplished easily, and two birds killed with one stone."

"Explain."

"You've not forgotten the casket we robbed, Dave, in order to secure a body to haul from the river and palm off for Miller's?"

"I'm not very likely to have forgotten it," Graff answered, with a growl.

"Then you've forgotten that the casket is still in the Hammond tomb, Dave. You said last night you feared it might be opened some day, and our trick suspected."

"And so it might. Empty caskets aren't usually found in a tomb."

"Fool of a man!" exclaimed Nell Miller, laughing. "Can't you see at what I am driving?"

"No; I'm blessed if I can!"

With an expression of sinister evil on her cold white face, the woman leaned across the table and patted the man on the hand.

"Suppose," she said, with slow significance, "that this ruffian in the cellar could in some way be induced to visit the tomb in our company?"

"Well, what then?"

"Wouldn't it be dead easy, Dave, to dispose of him then and there?"

"Yes, that could be done."

"And suppose you then were to put on him the clothes we took from the Hammond body before clothing it in those like my husband's?"

Graff's grim countenance suddenly brightened as he caught the woman's idea.

"You mean, Nell, to dress Kelly in the garments we took from Hammond, and then place him in Hammond's empty coffin?"

"Of course I mean that!" the woman cried curtly. "That not only would dispose of this ruffian who has come in our way, but also fill the empty box. Then, if it were opened hereafter, who would suspect anything? Hammond's garments would be there, and it's a hundred to one the body would have changed beyond recognition. It's only a bare chance that the casket will ever again be opened, you know. The best of it is, we can thus get rid of this ruffian and easily dispose of his body."

"You are right enough in that."

"The graveyard is secluded enough, and the deed can be done any night without danger if you have sand enough to do it."

"I have sand enough for anything, when there's a fortune at stake," retorted Graff curtly.

"What are you thinking about, then?"

"I'm trying to think up a way by which the man can be induced to visit the place."

"Where are your brains to-night?" demanded Nell Miller contemptuously. "That can be easily done."

"How?"

"In this way," she quickly explained, with a readiness indicating her utterly evil and designing nature. "Give the fellow to understand that we have discussed the situation in which his discovery places us, and that we are ready to bribe him to silence."

"Well?"

"Tell him anything whatever that will lead him to believe you mean what you say," continued Nell forcibly. "Tell him the whole story, Dave, from beginning to end. Even that can do no harm, since a dead man can tell no tales!"

"Go on, Nell."

"If you thus let him into the whole game, Dave, he'll surely believe you, and think you are dealing on the level with him."

"That's true enough."

"Then, after you have told him the whole design, tell him you are ready to pay him his price for silence upon one condition."

"What's the condition?"

"That he will become an accessory to the crime! That he will do this by lending us a hand in exhuming the body buried from here yesterday, and replacing it in its proper casket in the tomb."

"But——"

"Wait a bit! You will need only to open the Hammond tomb, and pretend you first wish to get the empty casket ready."

"Ah, I get the idea now!" exclaimed Graff, with a quick compression of his lips. "It ought to be easy!"

"Once get him into the tomb, it should be as good as done," said the woman, with vicious eagerness. "A blow on the head, a knife thrust, a bullet, even! The report would not be heard."

"No, there'd be no danger of that, Nell."

"But there is one thing you must be careful to do."

"What's that?"

"You must impress him with the idea that you are asking this in order to make him an accessory, and that your aim in doing it is only to assure yourself of his subsequent silence."

"You can leave that to me, Nell."

"It will blind him to our deeper design, and, in the hope of gain, he will readily assent. Tell him the whole story, Dave! That will surely make him think we are dealing up and up with him, and have really taken him into the game."

"I will go down to him now!" exclaimed Graff, on whom the infamous scheme had made a most favorable impression. "I will have it out with him this very night."

"No, wait!" cried Nell Miller, starting up and detaining him. "Are you sure he is secure until morning?"

"As secure as if already in the tomb!"

"Let him remain where he is, then, until morning."

"Why so?"

"Because too great haste, too ready a consent to his demands, may arouse his suspicion. Let him wait until morning. Then give him to understand that we have spent all night discussing the situation and the safest way of dealing with him. The delay will make our consent all the more credible."

Dave Graff, as great a scoundrel as she, yet without her keenness of perception, gazed down for a moment at her white face and glowing eyes, his own reflecting a quick uprising of fondness and admiration.

"You have a great head, Nell!" he exclaimed, taking her hands. "You should have been a man and a——

"Ah, but I am glad you're not!" he broke off to explain. "We'll do what you say. Let this man Kelly remain where he lies until morning."

"That's the surest way, Dave."

"And his bed will be broader, and his room a big sight more airy than the one he'll occupy to-morrow."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN IN THE DOGSKIN JACKET.

With returning consciousness, the first vague impressions realized by Sheridan Keene were those of a difficulty in breathing and an intense pain in the muscles of his arms.

They were like the horrid sensations of a dream, or a nightmare, and their very poignancy soon brought him to himself with startling abruptness.

Then he found that he was gagged. His arms were secured behind him, and he was lying on them. His feet were bound together and fastened to the floor on which he was lying, with only a few rags and pieces of burlap under him.

By partly turning on his side he relieved the pain in his cramped muscles, and set his mind at work to fathom his present predicament and surroundings.

He quickly remembered the scene in the dining room, and the sudden artful strategy of Nell Miller by which he had been worsted.

"The devil take her! Only a woman could have fooled me in that way," he said to himself, as his mind became clearer. "This is what comes of looking for absolute evidence. But I'll turn the tables on them yet."

He could not have told as quickly, however, by what means it was to be accomplished, for the hands that had secured the ropes by which he was bound had done their work well. Though he strained his powerful arms until the bones cracked, he could not stir his bonds by the breadth of a hair.

Then he fell to listening, and to straining his eyes to penetrate the intense darkness. Through a single window only, higher than the floor on which he was lying, he could see the glimmer of stars; and he finally heard the sound of moving feet overhead, and then realized that he had been brought into the cellar or basement for safe-keeping.

"It'll be a sorry day for them if they fail to make a complete job of this and finish me up entirely," he decided grimly. "That's their only hope, if they only know it."

Had he known their actual sentiments and design he would have bothered his head no more about it, but have made himself as comfortable as possible, and tried to sleep away the time until morning.

After what seemed like an endless interval, he heard a clock strike in the hall above.

"Midnight!"

Then he heard the fall of moving feet again; and then followed another long period of absolute silence.

He turned once more to his side, and fell to staring through the narrow window at the stars, hoping the clock would strike again, and tell him the passing of another hour.

Presently, against the starlight outside, he saw a pair of legs pass the cellar window.

"What does that mean?" he involuntarily asked himself. "Some one is prowling about outside!"

As if in answer to the mute questions that flashed through his mind, he soon heard a sound different from any that yet had reached his ears.

It was like the grating of an iron bar on a stone; and presently it was followed by the faint grating of rusty hinges.

Then a faint light permeated the darkness, and he saw that a bulkhead door was being very cautiously opened; and again the pair of legs was discernible outside.

"I guess they are about to finish up the job," said Keene to himself.

He waited and watched, then felt a thrill of hope.

The bulkhead door had been opened to its full extent, and there was apparently but one person outside.

"A burglar! Some one breaking into the house!" decided the detective. "By Jove! I hope he'll stumble over me!"

Then the legs started down the stone steps from the ground above.

They were followed by a human trunk, on which was a human head, and presently the figure of a man, a little darker than the surrounding darkness, stood motionless in the cellar floor.

Keene held his breath and waited.

Then the sudden flare of a match dispelled the darkness, and the detective beheld once more the bushy black beard and soiled dogskin jacket of the disguised man he had met on the river bank two days before.

"The logger from up Canada way!"

The stranger discovered the detective at the same moment, and instantly extinguished the match.

The next moment Keene felt the man's hands laid on him, and knew that he was kneeling by his side. The hands felt above his heart, as if to sense its beating; and then a low, cautious whisper came through the darkness.

"You're alive! Are you conscious, also?"

Keene could not reply in words, but he gave his body a wriggle, signifying that he was very much alive, and understood what had been said.

"You are lucky!" whispered the stranger. "You have a tough, hard head, to have stood the crack they gave you!"

Then the hands pawed over his face till they discovered why he had made no verbal response.

"Oh, you're gagged!"

Keene gave another wriggle, and wagged his head violently, trying to make the man understand that he wanted to have the gag removed.

But the fellow in the dogskin jacket did not, or would not, understand.

Instead of removing the gag, he bent lower and whispered:

"Listen to me! Can you hear me?"

Keene bent his head in the affirmative.

Then the stranger's low voice became more bitter and intense.

"You're getting what you deserve," he said slowly; "for you're plotting to secure blood money! Money secured by the blood of a man who never did you a wrong!"

Once more Keene wriggled violently, but the fellow beside him would not understand.

"You deserve the fate designed for you, yet I shall stand in the way of those who would slay you, and prevent the sacrifice of your life. But your obedience to my commands must be my reward for the service I do you. Do you hear me and understand?"

Keene nodded, wondering what was to follow.

"Your life is in danger," the stranger continued. "Listening outside, I overheard the plot for your destruction. You are to be told the whole story of Calvin Miller's murder, in order that you will believe that these knaves intend to deal fairly with you, and mean to comply with your demands. Do you understand me, and appreciate their motive?"

Keene gave a low grunt of affirmation.

"Note me, then," the man continued. "You then are to be induced to visit a tomb in a lonely graveyard back here a piece, in which there is a casket that has been robbed of its dead. Once having been inveigled into the place, your life is to be taken and your body placed in the empty casket. Do you follow me?"

The detective, thrilled now with growing satisfaction, quickly bowed his head.

The stranger bent lower.

"That is the plot of these knaves by which to remove you," he continued, with suppressed intensity. "But their design must be foiled. Their crime must be brought home to them. The whole truth must be learned by you when they attempt to mislead you through their own betrayal. They will make these disclosures with the assurance that your lips will be sealed by death. Once more, do you understand?"

Once more the detective eagerly nodded.

"They must be arrested at the tomb! They shall be arrested at the tomb!" repeated the stranger, with intensely bitter significance. "Do you now see that their downfall is certain, and that you can gain nothing from them?"

Keene quickly bowed.

"And will you now pledge yourself to obey me, and to follow my commands to the letter? The absolute proof of their guilt must be secured, and by you. Will you swear to follow my commands?"

Keene signified his immediate assent, and once more made a desperate attempt to show that he wanted the gag removed, that he might speak.

But the man kneeling by his side now said quickly:

"No, I'll not release you! I will take no chances that they suspect this visit. The alteration of a single knot might be detected, and alarm them. You must lie here until morning. This shall be your only punishment for seeking blood money. In the morning they will come to your relief. Once more, do you promise to obey me to the very letter?"

With an effort, Keene muttered a quick and eager assent.

The man in the dogskin jacket again bent lower.

"Listen," he said softly; "these are my commands!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE WORLD'S SALTIEST WATERS.

The saltest water in the world is said to be in the lake of Urumia, in Persia, situated more than 4,000 feet above the sea level. It is much salter than the Dead Sea, the water having been found on analysis to contain nearly 22 per cent of salt, against 8.5 per cent, according to Marshall,

in the Dead Sea. Lake Urumia is eighty-four miles long, and twenty-four miles broad, and its northern coasts are incrusted with a border of salt glittering white in the sun. No living thing except a very small species of jelly fish can survive in it. The three saltest pieces of surface water in the world are Urumia, the Dead Sea, and the Great Salt Lake of Utah, in the United States.

KANGA-ROOIN.

By MAX ADELER.

They had a masquerade party over at Wilmington one night, and Peter Lamb went as a kangaroo. He got a kangaroo costume down from a place in the city, and everybody said it made an uncommonly good representative of the animal. He got back to New Castle about two o'clock in the morning, and while walking along the street in the costume Cooley's bulldog suddenly flew out at him. The kangaroo had barely time to climb upon the top of the gatepost, and to draw up his legs, before the dog was close upon him. Here he sat in the darkness, the dog trying to jump up and seize him, and Peter meanwhile calling in vain for help. But two or three hours passed by without any help coming, and Peter was nearly frozen to death, while the dog was as demonstrative and persistent as ever. About five o'clock, just about dawn, Cooley came around through the yard on his way to early market. To his amazement, he saw a huge animal of some kind perched upon the gatepost. He made up his mind that it must have escaped from some menagerie, and, walking quietly back to the kitchen, he got the clothesline, made a slip noose in it, and came cautiously out again. Removing his boots, he stepped softly up behind the kangaroo, and, slipping the noose over its head, he suddenly retreated, and, pulling the rope, jerked Mr. Lamb to the ground, when the dog instantly seized him by the leg. Peter screamed with fright and pain, and as soon as Cooley saw the mistake, and understood the situation, he hauled off the dog and untied the rope. Then the kangaroo stood upon its hind legs, and Cooley said he was sorry about it.

"Oh, never you mind about being sorry," said Mr. Lamb. "It's all very nice to talk about being sorry. But if it hadn't been for that infernal dog of yours I'd been in bed five hours ago, and if you hadn't come fooling around with that rope the dog wouldn't 'a' bit me. Don't talk to me about being sorry! What good's that going to do my leg? I'm going home now to dress, and then I'm coming around with a shotgun to blow the liver out of that dog, and to bust you over the head with the butt."

Then Mr. Lamb limped off. Next time he goes to a masquerade party he will assume the character of Mary, Queen of Scots.

FACTS ABOUT THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

For thirty-seven long years the National League of baseball clubs has been in operation, and during but thirteen of these has the organization had a rival. In the long time that the league has been in operation there has been change after change, the most important coming with the dropping of such cities as Providence and Baltimore and the substituting of clubs in cities with a larger population.

Until the American League was formed, in 1900, the National had a monopoly on major league ball. It was only after a hard fight that the old circuit gave in and permitted the formation of a younger circuit, the powers of the older league fully realizing that with another major-league circuit salaries would go up, better ball would be required, and every phase of the game would cost more, all of which cut down the profits of the game.

The National clubs are unfortunately bossed by a number of moneyed men, who, unfortunately, are a bit hard to please, and this has caused much trouble for the different clubs. When you get a bunch like Charles W. Murphy, C. H. Ebbetts, and Barney Dreyfuss mixed up in the same undertaking there is bound to be a lot of squabbling. All these men wish to have their own way, and when they are crossed you have to watch out.

Perhaps the biggest squabble in the league in recent years came some three years ago over the election of a president. Some wanted one man while others favored another, and for a time it looked as if the league would split. Finally, however, all differences were patched up, and Tom Lynch was named as the ruling power. This, however, is in name only.

Unlike the American League, the older organization has a pennant-winning monopoly of three clubs, namely, New York, Chicago, and Pittsburgh. In the past twelve years these clubs have won every pennant, always being closely bunched for the first three places, with the remaining teams far in the rear. This serves to lessen the interest in the race, and by the time the season is about to close all the interest that can be stirred up is in the three towns that have a look-in.

Since 1900 there have been twelve pennant races, and all have been won by Pittsburgh, New York, and Chicago, the three splitting the flags three ways. Before the time of the pennant-winning trio many clubs shared in the pennant-winning habit. First Boston would win, then Brooklyn, Providence, Baltimore, and even Detroit. In late years, however, the Boston and Brooklyn clubs have dropped this pennant-winning habit, and are usually fighting for the last round of the ladder.

The honor of holding the title as leading batsman has been held by a score or more players, no one having any monopoly on the honor. Many have won the honor more seasons than one, while others grabbed it off one year and then dropped almost completely out of baseball. This was especially true in the younger days of the game when such men as Gore, Dalrymple, Barnes, and White held top places.

The distinction of holding the highest batting average ever made in a major league goes to Duffy, the old Boston star, who hit for an average of .438 back in 1894. This player is the only one who ever beat out the marks of Lajoie and Cobb, who hold top honors in the younger circuit. This, however, was so far back that many figure that Lajoie's average of .422 is superior. Lajoie made his high run when the game had reached its height and better ball was played.

Hans Wagner and A. C. Anson are probably the greatest batting stars ever developed in the old league. For seven seasons Wagner was at the top of the batting list of the league, his highest mark being .355, and was made in 1904. Anson topped the circuit for four years, and his highest average, .421, was made in 1887. Burkett and Brouthers are two other old stars who held the lead more than a couple of times.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Swedish Athletes May Compete in Chicago.

Swedish athletes who won championships at the Olympic games in Stockholm last summer are to be invited to participate in the American games to be held at Chicago from June 28 to July 6.

If the athletes decide to come they will be given a free trip by Charles S. Peterson, president of the Swedish Club, of Chicago, and by Everett C. Brown, director-general of the games. All of the expenses of the ocean trips over and back would be borne by Mr. Peterson, while their expenses from New York to Chicago and return would be taken care of by the management of the tournament.

Must Agree Not to Marry.

Too many sun-bronzed young engineers, too much tropical moon, and too much sentiment have disrupted the office force of the C. G. Warran Company, of New York, down on the Panama Canal.

From this time on, until the work of the company is done, every stenographer must sign the pledge that she will not fall victim to the tender glances of the engineer on the digger or to the admiration of the blue-shirted engineer with a red bandanna about his neck. The pledge must hold good for five years.

When the company obtained the contract for a part of the work on the Panama Canal the manager of the work took with him several stenographers from the main offices.

That was a year ago. Now three of the stenographers have married supervising engineers, four others married foreman, one eloped with a native, and others returned home because of homesickness.

At least that is the tale of woe which is told in letters now being circulated among the Chicago stenographers. These letters began to arrive a week ago, and several young women stenographers have received offers of large salaries if they will promise not to marry within five years.

Ladder Permits Escape from Jail.

A ladder that had been left in the yard of the Vermont State prison, at Windsor, Vt., furnished John Winters, a convict, with a means of escape recently. Winters is the second prisoner to escape by a ladder within less than three weeks.

He had served three months of a seventeen-year term for a crime committed at Norwich. He has a prison record in New Hampshire.

On March 21, Patrick McGovern, a convicted burglar, climbed over the wall. He has not been captured.

The High Cost of Shooting.

Four hundred thousand dollars' worth of torpedoes, the first to be made by the navy department, were discharged in Newport Harbor, R. I., recently, as a preliminary test of the government-built product.

There were seventy-five torpedoes in the lot, of the Whitehead type, each costing $5,333.33.

They were built in Newport at the government factory, where, according to naval officers, the cost of manufacture is less than the price heretofore paid to foreign makers.

The tests were made from a tube on the government wharf. The range was 500 yards, toward the south end of the harbor.

Sleuths Robbed of $1,000 by Bandits.

A posse is scouring the hills near Ogden, Utah, for two men who obtained $1,000 and escaped after a running fight with two detectives. The bandits had demanded that Mrs. Thomas D. Dee and Mrs. B. E. Bristol leave the money on Cañon road. The detectives disguised themselves as women and drove to the spot with the money in a bag. Instead of arresting the men, they were compelled to turn over the money at the point of sawed-off shotguns. Then they opened fire, but the robbers escaped.

To Train 1,000 Airmen.

Claude Grahame-White, addressing the Women's Aërial League, at London, England, said he had placed before the government a comprehensive scheme for putting aviation in England in a sound condition at small cost. In company with a group of financiers he had undertaken to produce the sum of $10,000,000 to be devoted to the establishment of aërodromes in all the big cities, the purchase of hydroaëroplanes, and the construction of dirigibles. The organization, he added, was prepared to train yearly 500 pilots for the army and 500 for the navy. The government was considering the scheme.

Sunflowers in Warships.

The sunflower it seems, is used for numberless purposes by different nations. In this country it is considered valuable in the construction of battleships, the stalks being pithy and when compressed in blocks the pith absorbs a tremendous quantity of water. These blocks are made to line the battleships' sides and placed between two walls of steel.

In Russia the seed is now raised by the millions of pounds each year and makes quite an eatable oil, while the residue is turned into a seedcake for the cattle. The blossoms furnish honey and after that an excellent yellow dye.

The Chinese are successful in getting from the stalks a silky fiber.

American League Leads in Series.

Next fall the National League will have the chance to square the world's series count between it and the American organization by winning the odd and thus making the record of the two leagues for the championships an even count, five apiece.

For, since 1903, when the two leagues got on their feet again after nearly twenty years of idleness on the part of either the one or the other, the Ban Johnson circuit has corralled one more champ title than has the older organization.

The Boston Americans started the winning for the American League and have been the last to uphold the

honor of the circuit. Pittsburgh was the opponent of the Red Sox in 1903, when the Pirates went down before the Hub boys after winning three of the eight games which were played.

In 1904 there was no series, but the following year the National League was revenged on its rival by intrusting the gage of battle to the New York Giants. The Athletics were their opponents, and were completely swamped by the New York team, which allowed them but one victory out of the five games.

In 1906 it was Greek versus Greek. That was a redoubtable world's series, staged in the Windy City between its two teams, the White Sox and the Cubs, each monarch of its respective circuit. The series was a screamer, the teams running neck and neck to the finish, when the Chicago Americans downed the Chicago Nationals by taking four battles to their three.

But next year, 1907, there was nothing to it but the Cubs. That was the year when Detroit began its whirlwind sweep of three successive league championships. They met the Cubs, and went down ingloriously, losing four games and managing to tie up one.

The Cubs duplicated the stunt in 1908, but laid it on a little thicker, trouncing the Tigers five times.

In 1909 Detroit went against a new rival, but was downed again. The Pittsburgh Corsairs met the Michiganders, and after a grilling series took the odd game. The final count was 5 to 4. Thus for three successive seasons was the championship held in the lair of the National circuit.

Connie Mack's Athletics came to the fore in 1910 to retrieve the fortunes of the Ban Johnson organization. With the Cubs opposing them, the Mackmen ran away with the games, getting four to Chicago's one.

It was the same story in 1910, although New York, the National champs, managed to get two games against four for the Philadelphians.

The Boston Red Sox made it three straight world's championships for the American League by whipping the Giants into shape last fall. That, too, is a world's series worth remembering, and it is still indelibly impressed on the map and mind of the diamond fanatic. Four to three was, of course, the way it came out, with Boston in the lead.

Money Rains in Street After Bank Explosion.

Bills, coins, and checks rained on the street, at Flat River, Mo., when a gasoline tank connected with a new lighting plant exploded in the Miners & Merchants' Bank. The safe was open and its contents, some of the paper in a blaze, were blown through the door. About $1,000 in currency was burned, but the remainder was recovered.

Reasonably Scared Almost to Death.

A motorist and his wife were enjoying, a few days ago, the solitudes of the old royal forest of Fontainebleu, which is within an easy drive of Paris, France, and saw a lion among the trees. The lady fainted at once.

The husband put on speed, while the lion quietly watched the car. The wind revived the lady, who collapsed again when a panther strolled across the road.

The car rushed on at full speed until the occupants saw a band of men in white robes, armed with picks and javelins and wearing the armor of classical times. These people stood in front of the car and stopped it. One of them explained: "We are employed by a cinematograph company. A lion and a panther have been liberated in the forest after being drugged with morphia. We have to represent soldiers capturing ferocious beasts intended to devour the early Christians."

Fall Slower in Mexico.

Did you know that you "drop" faster in Massachusetts than in Mexico? For instance, if you were to fall from a twenty-story building in Boston you would descend a lot faster than if you fell from the same height in Mexico City.

The principle of this is quite simple, even if it does seem a bit startling. It is merely that as one goes toward the equator the force of gravity gets less and less and the quickness of descent of a falling body slower. And while doubtless you would feel just as uncomfortable falling that distance in one place as in another, and the results would be just as disastrous, there are times and things in which the difference is not only perceptible but worth a notice.

In Boston, if you were to fire horizontally with a rifle and your gun were sixteen feet from the ground, the bullet fired would reach the ground one second after it had left the rifle. But if you were to take that same rifle to Mexico City and fire it off the same distance from the earth it would take one and one-half seconds to reach the ground.

So it is easy to see how, when hunting in different parts of the world, it is necessary to calculate time from this same shifting standard of reckoning.

1913 Disastrous to Shipowners.

The year 1913 has proved thus far the most disastrous that shipowners on both sides of the Atlantic have experienced in near fifty years.

Correct estimates of the loss caused by the series of storms that have swept the coasts of Europe and America are difficult to obtain, but one authority, who based his figures on the Lloyd's reports, said recently the damage to deep-sea vessels alone would amount to $7,000,000. This does not include the loss suffered by the coasting trade of the United States, estimated at several millions.

During the month of January alone one agency reported the loss or partial wreckage of 328 sailing vessels and 510 steamships. January was the month of the largest number of wrecks. The estimate of $7,000,000 for the total damage to deep-sea ships was obtained after deducting probable salvage from the Lloyd's estimate of losses.

One result of the year's storms has been the annihilation of many of the few of the wooden schooners left in the American coasting trade. American shippers, it is said, will have to depend hereafter largely upon barges and steam freighters. The price of all ocean vessels has risen.

The rise of marine insurance rates, which was started by the loss of the *Titanic*, has received additional impulse from the large number of recent wrecks.

Odd Names for Towns.

A railroad man interested in curious things has found that there is a remarkable variety in names of towns throughout the United States. One can travel from Dan to Beersheba. Three Hospitals offer healing to the sick,

and should they die their bodies may be placed upon a Bier. Nine Graves are open, or they may be buried in a Tomb. A Gravestone or Tombstone await them.

He who seeks may find balm in thirteen Gileads and a Panacea for all ills.

For three Adams there are provided four Eves and thirty-six Edens.

He who wishes to tempt Fate will find two in his journey. Those of domestic proclivities may toil in two Kitchens or pass the time at the Grill, Gridiron, Bake Oven, or Johnny Cake Siding. The blacksmith can find employment in three Foundries and listen to the ring of five Anvils.

Though the days of the whipping post are gone, there are three Pounds and a Prison Siding or Prison Track for wrongdoers. For the fugitive there is a Refuge. For two Forlorn Hopes there is but one Regret.

The plodder may put his nose to two Grindstones. Those who like condiments have Pepper, Mustard, or Clove. If the floods descend, five Arks await you to take you to four Ararats, with eight Olive Branches for the dove to bring back.

Four Lovers exist for the lovelorn, twenty Friendships for the less ardent. There is one Rapture and seventeen Blisses.

The heathen has two Idols, the nun her Convent, and the monk his Monastery. The religious may make a pilgrimage to Sabbath Day Lake, or find spiritual uplift at Bible Grove or Bible Hill.

Proceeding along one Byway to four Highways, bewilderment will be caused by eleven Cross Roads. No solution of the high cost of living is offered, for New Jersey offers the lone Bargaintown.

Who should be sad when there is music of the Harp and Violin? Resources are Bountiful and Joy. Property and Tranquillity prevail. There is Good Luck and all are Happy. In Angels' Camp we may find Heartsease.

Juliet has five Romeos, but Adonis is solitary and alone. For ten Damons there is one Pythias, and one Joan for nine Darbys.

The wicked may turn Crook, go to Rogueville with a pistol and shed Blood. There they may flee to Robbers-roost or to the Drunkard, who has his Brandy at Whisky Switch. They might prove an Alibi.

The hermit is not forgotten, for Exile, Lonely, Lonesome, Lone Willow, Lone Pine, Lone Oak, Lone Star, and Lone Mountain all beckon to him. Thousands tread the roads to fifteen Damascuses.

It is not strange that so many of those who emigrate to America remain here; for there is but one Doorway and one Exit.

The New Secretary of Labor.

William B. Wilson, secretary of the new department of labor, has undertaken the job of making himself a useful member of President Wilson's cabinet, and there is no indication that he will fail. He says his department is going to be of benefit to the working people of the United States, and he has mapped out a program which he will put before Congress immediately.

Wilson was never in school except for a few days when he was a child. He began helping his father dig coal in a Pennsylvania mine when he was 8 years old. His father had a lame back and could not lift a heavy piece of coal, but he could lie on his back on the bottom of the shaft and undercut the coal seam, and he used to do that, and little "Billy" Wilson loaded it into the cars.

He dug coal until he was nearly 40 years old, and then he got a position with the United Mine Workers of America at $2,000 a year, and later was elected to Congress.

In spite of the trouble he had in getting an education, Wilson is a well-educated man. He forced himself to learn, and he has been described as "an intellectual wonder."

New Coin a Picture Puzzle.

A Maryville, Mo., man has discovered a picture puzzle in the face of the new nickels. He declares it is a profile of Uncle Sam cleverly concealed in the head of the buffalo, and that it doesn't take a "futurist" to see it, either.

To find it, Frank Adams, the discoverer, gives the following directions:

Take a perfectly coined nickel and hold it at such an angle that the straight line of the buffalo's nose is perpendicular. Uncle Sam's face starts at about the buffalo's nose. In the roots of the animal's beard is the suggestion of Uncle Sam's mouth, and his beard is formed by the buffalo's beard.

Save Seven from Jaws of Sharks.

How seven sailors, who had been without food and water for three days on a sinking barkentine, were rescued just as they were about to fall prey to a school of sharks is told by Captain Blackader, of the *Manzanillo*, who has arrived in New York from Havana.

A derelict with seven men aboard was sighted by the *Manzanillo* after it had run into the end of a hurricane on the way to Havana. A great school of man-eating sharks was following the wreck. The sea was rough, but Captain Blackader called for volunteers to man a boat. Five men responded, and, after a hard fight, reached the wreck and took the seven men aboard. Five minutes later the wreck sank. The rescued men were off the barkentine *Mary Burke*, which sailed out of Pensacola.

A Chip of the Old Block.

J. Pierpont Morgan, junior, who, as a result of the death of his father, takes the direction of the big Morgan interests in America and Europe, is 46 years old, looks like his father did at 46, talks like his father did, acts like his father did, and smokes big black cigars, just as his father did.

He spent years in the Morgan bank in New York and at the head of the Morgan interests in London, and eight years ago was given enough power to fit him for his present task. He has a personal fortune independent of the millions his father left. He loves work, hates sham and the flashy ways of the new rich, and James J. Hill, the railroad builder, who has been his tutor in several branches of finance, says:

"He is a chip of the old block."

Fine Senatorial Baths Locked Up.

Senators who have been accustomed to splash luxuriously in the fine baths in the Senate office building will splash there no more. The big baths, by order of the Democratic caucus of the Senate, have been locked up, and bath attendants have had their official heads cut off. All this in the way of economy, it was said.

The next move is to be made against the Senate barber

shop, where senators are allowed to have their whiskers trimmed and their hair cut free of charge. The barber shop may be continued, but each senator will have to pay for his own shave or hair cut.

Senator Kenyon, Republican, of Iowa, is one of those who believe that the free hair cuts should be discontinued, and last session tried unsuccessfully to get a bill of that kind passed.

Driver of Fast Train Scared by Auto Ride.

Michael Collins, driver of one of the fastest passenger trains leaving Milwaukee, Wis., has taken his first and last ride in an automobile on a crowded street.

"Never again," he solemnly swore, raising his right hand. "I have driven a locomotive ninety miles an hour, and have never had an accident, but a locomotive is safety itself compared to these buzz wagons."

"Pioneer Mike," as he is known, took his trip with his son, who is an automobile salesman, at a time when there were many machines on the boulevard. He says a locomotive does not have to be guided, and says that the thirty-five-mile-an-hour rate he rode in the automobile is far more dangerous than a ninety-mile rate in a railroad train.

Smoot Has Plan to Cut High Cost.

Senator Smoot has a plan to reduce the cost of living which he hopes to see Congress adopt, which he says would cost the United States about $500,000 annually and save millions to housewives. The senator expects to reintroduce his bill appropriating $10,000 annually to each State and Territory, to be used through agricultural experiment stations in research and experiments in home economics, the results to be printed and distributed in each State and Territory.

"Such legislation," the senator said, "would rob the American garbage can of millions of dollars annually by teaching young girls how to purchase, prepare and cook food, and how to utilize the food that is left over."

"If I had a dozen daughters," he said, "and was able to give each one of them a million dollars the day of her marriage I would still want each one to know how to cook, make her own clothes, and in fact be a superior housekeeper."

The senator's bill was not pressed at the last session, but many women's organizations have indorsed it.

Cork in California.

Supervisor Charlton, of the Angeles National Forest, California, has begun an experiment on a large scale with a view of determining whether the cork trees that flourish in Spain can be raised in southern California. To that end he has just completed resetting 1,000 cork trees, each about two feet high, in the country back of San Bernardino. In the same region thousands of cork-tree seeds have been planted.

Charlton believes that with proper attention and care trees furnishing the cork of commerce can be profitably and successfully raised in that part of the country.

Brief Sporting News.

Nap Lajoie says his recipe for keeping in good condition is to take some exercise every day, eat only when hungry and never "stuff." Lajoie and Hans Wagner have passed the 35-year mark, yet they continue to perform stunts on the baseball diamond with the same sprightliness of the recruit of 1913.

Orvie Overall, formerly one of the star pitchers of the Chicago National League team, will be a member of the team this season. He has signed up after having been promised more than he asked in the matter of salary. Overall is one of the close friends of Mordecai Brown, the great pitcher, who will be with the Cincinnati Reds this year, but who was for a number of seasons one of the important cogs in the Chicago Cubs' machine.

George Mullen, who is one of the most clever pitchers in the big leagues, says that the last curve has been invented. "Pitchers may develop new ways of throwing curves, but the ball will never break differently," says George. "The pitchers of to-day have command of all the curves, and from now on it seems to me that baseball will be developed from hitting and base-running angles. Pitchers of to-day can make the ball curve in almost any direction, so what chance is there for a 'new curve' being brought out?"

Frank Gotch is just as good to-day as he ever was, and perhaps better. It is foolish to put ordinary wrestlers against the big Iowan. The world's champion made such easy work of Lurich, the big Russian, in their recent bout at Kansas City, Mo., that the men who had paid $18,000 to see the match were disgusted.

Johnny Bassler, the recruit catcher of the Cleveland Naps, is the youngest backstop in the American League. He is 17 years old.

Clyde Milan, the speed merchant of the Washington Senators, who was promised a bonus if he stole more bases this year than he did last, says he is not going out to make a record. "I'll steal any time I see an opening," said Clyde, "but I'm not going to run wild on the paths."

Hugh Jennings, manager of the Detroit Tigers, must have a conscience. He says he is through with vaudeville because he's ashamed to impose on the people and take their money under false pretenses.

"People think I play baseball for the love of the game," says Ty Cobb, of the Detroit team, "but it is not true. When I first broke in I would play for 'most anything, but now it is different. It is a business, and every man should get as much from his business as is possible."

Ed Walsh, of the Chicago White Sox, "the king" of spitball artists, has developed a mystifying slow ball which he uses when he desires.

"Recruits nowadays are too quiet and retiring," says Joe Tinker, manager of the Cincinnati Reds. "Noise, noise—squawking all the time—that's what I want, and that's what wins baseball games."

There are but two major league clubs that boast a mighty batting pair: Detroit, with Cobb and Crawford, and Cleveland, with Jackson and Lajoie.

Walter H. Page.

Walter H. Page, of New York, editor and author, who has been selected by President Wilson to fill the most important ambassadorship, that to Great Britain, is not a rich man, and he is expected to set a new example for our diplomats abroad in his mode of life. President Wilson had considerable difficulty in inducing him to take the place, as Page said he could not afford it. The president told him that it was not necessary for him to be a money spender. Extravagance and ostentation have always surrounded the ambassadors to Great Britain and it is be-

lieved a little simplicity may increase respect for the United States as a nation.

Hugh C. Wallace, of Tacoma, Wash., an old friend of President Wilson, has been named as American ambassador to France.

Doctors Lived 6,000 Years Ago.

"The oldest physician whose existence was known practiced at the court of a pharaoh of the fifth dynasty about 6,000 years ago," said Doctor F. M. Sandwith, in a recent lecture in London. "His popularity with his master had apparently been great, for the pharaoh had given an order that he should be supplied with slabs of stone for his tomb similar to those he was having prepared for himself. His private life had evidently been less happy, for in every case the name of his wife had been erased.

"Splints found in the Nubian deserts were similar in principle to those of the present day, and the knots used to keep them in place were reef knots, the same as those now taught to students. The bandaging, as to-day, was done so that the folds crossed at right angles, with a view to their being kept in place. Palm fiber was used to serve the function of cotton wool, and a fine linen to take the place of gauze.

"Pare, who worked in the sixteenth century, was a soldier surgeon of the best type. He was a man who had never arrogated to himself the power of healing, and writing in his diary of an officer who had been struck in the chest with a shell, he made the entry that was typical of him: 'I dressed his wounds, God cured him.' There was the story, too, of Pare trying to get some substitute for the invariable practice of treating shot wounds with boiling oil. On one occasion the oil ran short, and Pare, forced to try a substitute for his wounded, spent a sleepless night.

"On finding them in the morning happy and without inflammation, he exclaimed: 'I will never again put boiling oil into these men's wounds,' and persuaded his colleagues to follow his example. To Pare, too, they owed the innovation of tying the arteries instead of cauterizing the stump of the limb. The instruments of the kind were curious, with strangely decorative handles, but little attention was paid to the problem of designing them so that they might easily be kept clean."

Curious methods used to be adopted for reducing dislocation by means of pulleys. Before it had been found that a small dose of chloroform would relax the muscles and make the patient unconscious during the torture mentioned, the pulley system was still in vogue. The most striking was that for reducing a dislocated shoulder. The patient stood on a stool with his arm over a ladder. An assistant stood on another stool so placed as to be able to throw his weight on the upper portion of the shoulder. Another friend pulled the arm down. At the critical moment some one quickly took away the stool on which the patient was standing, and if the proceeding was successful the arm went back with a click.

"Paracelsus," Doctor Sandwith said, "had been called the Luther of medicine, because while Luther had burned the papal bull, Paracelsus was a defender of research. He urged his students to go out and study the patients, to refuse to accept the idea that the internal arrangement of a man and a pig were the same, but to see if they were by dissection.

"Michael Servetus had helped to discover the circulation of the blood, but he aroused the old Adam in Calvin because he would not accept the orthodox views as to the doctrine of the Trinity. Calvin had had him burned at the stake, but he had died calling out: 'Jesus, son of Eternal God, have mercy.' It was a credit to Calvin's followers that 400 years later they had set up a statue with an inscription stating that while they still thought highly of Calvin, they had erected a monument in explanation of that one mistake."

German Cities Healthful.

Life is longer in the German cities than in the small towns. This is the discovery announced by the German Statistical Bureau, which has published figures showing that 546 persons in each 1,000 in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants reach the age of 50, compared with 539 reaching the same age in cities of between 20,000 and 100,000, and 544 in towns of less than 20,000.

"These figures pay a remarkable tribute to German efficiency," said Professor A. Fraenckel, director of the Municipal Hospital of Berlin. "We believe that speed in the cities tends to shorten life, but it helps to cure our own evils. We believe that one of the principal reasons for life being longer in the cities is that medical attention is prompt and expert at the same time. In small towns there are fewer doctors and hospitals, and often a patient dies when efficiency might have saved his life.

"Another great reason for longer life is the success of the recent campaign aimed at saving babies in the large cities through giving free instruction and assistance to mothers in the care of infants, and providing pure milk, free nurseries, and supplies. This is a difficult matter in the smaller cities because of the lack of organization. The result is that 39 more babies in every 1,000 live through the first year than was the case ten years ago.

"Germany has gone through a great awakening in matters of sanitation and healthful house conditions. The change has cost a great sum, but it is beginning to pay the finest kind of dividends, for the average length of life in Germany is now over six years more than was shown by the statistics of ten years ago."

Baseball in Philippines.

Baseball is doing more than bullets toward subjugating the warlike tribes of the Philippines, according to Elwood S. Brown, physical director of the Y. M. C. A. at Manila, who arrived in San Francisco from the Orient recently.

Tribes that a few years ago thought of little else than an opportunity to slash the American soldier with machetes are now trading their weapons for balls and bats, and even the head hunters of Northern Luzon promise to become "fans."

"Far in the interior of the islands," said Brown, "the natives, clad in their loin cloths, are playing the game. Recently a company of constabulary landed on Jolo Island, and as they were making camp they heard through the jungle an awful uproar. The soldiers, believing a village was being butchered, seized their guns and crept toward a clearing whence came the noise.

"There they saw a thousand natives dancing about and yelling their hardest. A little brown man was running madly toward a palm leaf that marked first base, and another, afterward identified as a chief, was telling the crowd that the 'hit was fair.'

"Only a few years ago this chief had given the con-

stabulary a lot of trouble. A visit to his shack showed that among his prize possessions were the photographs of some of the big-league players."

Oats Had Lost Both Feet.

Captain Lawrence Oates, of the English Inniskilling Dragoons, who died with Captain Robert F. Scott on his ill-fated antarctic expedition, had lost both his feet from frostbite before he stumbled out of the tent to his death on the stumps of his legs, according to a letter from Captain Watson, the agent of the Imperial Service Guild, at Wellington, New Zealand, who says he makes the revelation on the authority of Commander Evans. Previous reports as to Captain Oates' condition when he deliberately committed suicide told only half the truth, writes Captain Watson.

Weather Men Study Tornado.

The recent tornado which caused so much damage in the middle West was but one of the many incidents of the cyclonic storm that swept the whole country from west to east, brought on the floods and generated the southern windstorm that was not without its toll of damage. The storm was the most severe in many years, and was most probably induced by the very mild winter, resulting in the concentration of all of the winter's forces and then dealing them all out at once. The severity of the storm accounts for the tornado, child of the cyclone, which only recently ravaged Omaha and other Western cities.

It is the popular conception that "tornado" is "cyclone," and vice versa, but there is a considerable difference. Scientifically applied, a "cyclone" is the name of the general storm, while "tornado" is but one of the concentrated incidents of that storm as it passes through the country. The "hurricane" and the "typhoon" are similar to the "tornado," and are also but incidents of cyclonic storms.

There has been much scientific study of the storm itself, but because of the danger attending the tornado very few observations of its real character have been made. It is not considered the most pleasant job in the world to wait with scientific instruments the approach of a tornado. The close connection between the parent storm and the child tornado, however, and by the studies of eddies in air and water, based on a whirling force, scientists have been able to deduce an explanation of the tornado.

From studies of the storm they have been able to tell of its formation from the peculiar conditions in the atmosphere, whether of differences in temperature or amounts of pressure which cause the setting up of air currents. The movement of the storm may be compared to that of a fast-moving body of water. Let a dock deflect the course of that stream, and a whirling eddy is caused. In the case of the storm, the whirl would generate a tornado if the conditions were right. The air currents whirl around this object, whatever it might be, and come in contact with those above, drawing them into the whirling mass. How powerful the whirl of a tornado can be may be judged from the fact that often the diameter of a tornado is 1,000 feet, giving opportunity for the concentration of fast-moving currents into one column.

Like the parent storm, the differences in temperatures and amounts of moisture and the complications caused by the winds blowing over a revolving earth also affect the tornado. The center, or vortex, of the tornado is the point where the atmospheric pressure is least, and around which point the air currents whirl. As more currents join the whirling mass the center expands, and as the mass expands it cools, forming the black cloud that announces the coming storm. It is the opinion of many people that the electrical storm that accompanies the tornado induces it, but it is the other way around. The whole power of the storm above is concentrated in the tornado, which, moving at the rate of thirty miles an hour, cuts a wide swath. It is often deflected from its course by the most peculiar conditions, and performs some of the most peculiar antics.

A few white, feather-shaped clouds form the only means of telling from a considerable distance the approach of a tornado. It is an easy thing to tell what the funnel-shaped cloud means. But when fifty miles away white cloud specks of the feather shape seen in the sky can be relied upon. The cloud is called the virus, and arises from the vortex of the tornado, and is sped on by the fury of the winds.

The great Western plains, with their level country stretching for 1,000 miles or more without a barrier of any appreciable kind, form an ideal breeding place for the "twisters," as the tornado is known. A hundred years ago the great woods that once existed in the middle West might have been effective in checking them, but the few remaining clumps of trees have no more effect in stopping the tornado than wood has as a protection to the steel bullet. The tornado must run its course until some peculiar complication of events dissipates its energies.

Taft Praises Major Butt.

At a *Titanic* memorial service recently at the Calvary Baptist Church, at New Haven, Conn., the pastor, the Reverend J. W. Hoag, read an appreciation by ex-President Taft of Major Archibald Butt, his personal aid, who went down with the ship. Mr. Taft, after paying a high personal tribute to Major Butt, said:

"I very much doubt whether I have ever known a man who had so much self-abnegation, so much self-sacrifice, so much ability to put himself in the place of another and suffer and enjoy with that other as Archie Butt had.

"He left with us the sweet flavor of his unselfish life, and while we mourn for him, we felicitate him on the way he went. His heroism will stand as an example for future generations."

Wireless Without Masts.

By means of the invention of an Italian engineer, Galetti, it is hoped that within ten days it will be possible to communicate by wireless from Chambéry, in the southeast of France, to New York. A wireless station has been erected on a high cliff, in the village of Leschauz, near Chambéry.

Dispensing with antennæ, Galetti has set up two posts eight meters—about 26 feet 3 inches—high. These are connected by a wire from which a series of other wires 900 meters long—about 2,952 feet—converge to the operator's cabin at the foot of the cliff. Galetti obtained authority to test his system from the French post office department, which, working in coöperation with Italy and the United States, expects eventually to exploit the Leschauz station for the purposes of direct communication with New York. Galetti expresses satisfaction with the preliminary trials.

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